Rurouni Kenshin
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Nobuhiro Watsuki
volume 2

和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

WATSUKI IS STILL A LIAR.

IN THE INTERESTS OF FULL DISCLOSURE, THE KANJI FOR "RUROUNI" ISN'T READ "RUROUNI" AT ALL—YOU SURE WON'T FIND IT IN ANY DICTIONARY! ONCE AGAIN, WATSUKI HAS BEEN PULLING YOUR LEG. (IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE TAKEN IN BY THE LITTLE RUSE, SORRY!)

THAT ASIDE, IT'S BEEN SO CRAZY-BUSY LATELY THAT I FEEL EXACTLY LIKE THE LITTLE SKETCH UP THERE. I HAVEN'T EVEN HAD TIME TO DO A NEW, ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION FOR THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL. IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'LL HAVE TIME TO DO IT FOR VOLUME 3, EITHER, BUT I WILL FOR VOLUME 4—PROMISE! CROSS MY HEART!!

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in Japan's **Weekly Shonen Jump Special**. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing **Jump** series in 1994, **Rurouni Kenshin** ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of **Yahiko no Sakabatô** ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in Japan's **Weekly Shonen Jump**. His most current work, **Busô Renkin** ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication this June, also in Japan's **Jump**.

RUROUNI KENSHIN VOL. 2
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY

Vol. 2: THE TWO HITOKIRI

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

るろうに剣心

CAST

Himura Kenshin
(Hitokiri Battōsai)

緋村剣心
（人斬り抜刀斎）

Myōjin Yahiko

明神弥彦

Kamiya Kaoru

神谷薫

Kurogasa
(Udō Jin-e)

黒笠
（鵜堂刃衛）

Sagara Sanosuke
(Alias Zanza)

相楽左之助
（通称・斬左）

Hiruma Kihei

Once he was a *hitokiri*, an assassin, called *Battōsai*.

His name was legend among the *Ishin Shishi* or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era.

Now Himura Kenshin is a *rurouni*, a wanderer, who carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* blade to prohibit himself from killing.

Having exposed the scheme of the Hiruma Brothers to steal the Kamiya school's property with a "fake Battōsai," Kenshin's decided to stay on at the dojo for a while.

Hiruma Gohei

比留間喜兵衛・伍兵衛

THUS FAR

After losing all its students because of the hoax, the Kamiya dojo and its *"Kasshin-ryū"* sword style is taking its first steps toward revival.

Kenshin brings in Myōjin Yahiko, the son of an ex-samurai whom he rescued from the yakuza, to become its first new student.

But, still greedy for the property, the Hiruma Brothers escape from jail and hire Sagara Sanosuke, who fights the fights of others for a living, to get rid of the annoying Kenshin.

At first unwilling, Sanosuke takes the job when he learns who Kenshin *really* is—Sanosuke hates the so-called patriots and the chance to humble the greatest of them all is too tempting to pass by.

Ultimately Kenshin accepts Sanosuke's challenge, and while Kaoru, Yahiko, and the Hiruma Brothers watch, the deadly serious battle begins.

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Act 7—Mark of Evil

HE CAN DO IT!
HE DIDN'T FEEL A THING FROM BATTŌ-SAI'S BLOW!
CAN IT BE--?
YOU REALLY ARE A FOOL.
!!
BATTŌSAI DODGED HIS ZANBATŌ AS IF IT WEREN'T THERE.
ZANZA HAS NO CHANCE OF WINNING-- NO MATTER WHAT.
BUT THEN...
...THAT IS HOW I PLANNED IT!
HEH
ROUND TWO.
STRIKE !!!

THE ZANBATŌ'S SIZE LIMITS IT TO A FEW MODES OF ATTACK.
SWINGING DOWN--OR SWIPING SIDEWAYS.
!!!
!?
VERY...
EASY TO READ.

Act 7
Mark of Evil

READ THIS WAY
HWOHHH!!
GH!
ONE ISN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU, ZANZA.
SO THEN...

"RAPID-STRIKE"!
D-D-D-D!!!
D-D-D-D-D

So-o-o. *Rurouni Kenshin* is to become a CD book! I bet you're all surprised...but none more so than me. It's only been half a year, and already *Kenshin* is crossing over to other media...thanks to your support. Thank you—really!—so much.

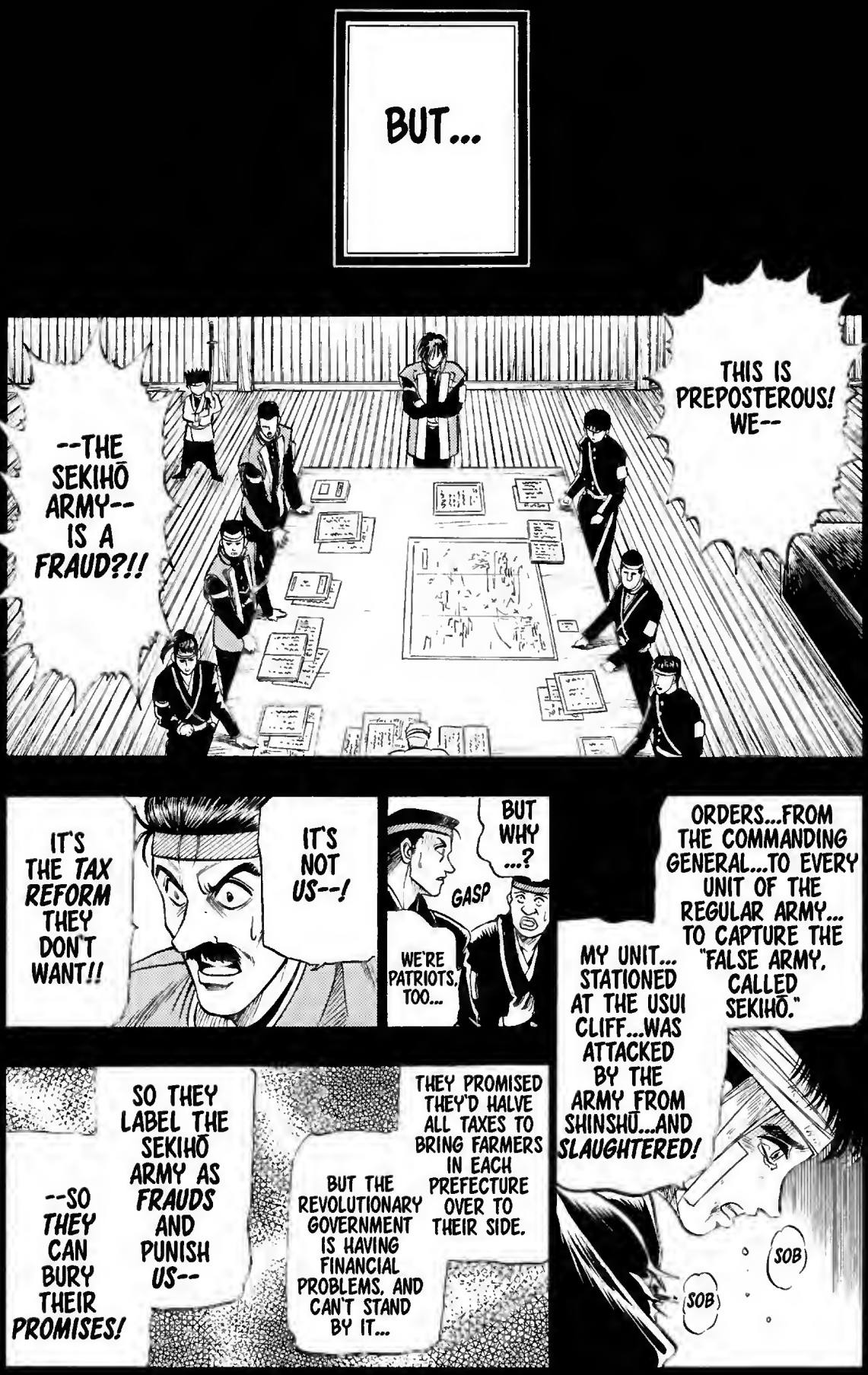
Watsuki

.....CAPTAIN SAGARA.
REMEMBER THIS MOMENT, SANOSUKE.
300 YEARS OF TOKUGAWA RULE WILL END...
AND THE NEW AGE WILL DAWN.
THE TIME OF THE STRONG EXPLOITING THE WEAK WILL PASS.
AND WE, THE SEKIHŌ ARMY, WILL LEAD IT IN.
"OUR STRUGGLES WILL DECIDE IF IT COMES IN ONE YEAR OR TEN." YEAH, YEAH.
EVEN THE CALLUSES ON MY EARS HAVE MEMORIZED IT.
THE TIME WHEN THERE IS NO "ABOVE" OR "BELOW" WILL ARRIVE.

Sekihō Army

A unit formed of civilians in 1868, immediately after the battle of Toba Fushimi. Advancing before the revolutionary army, it collected intelligence about future targets and gathered recruits.

The 1st unit of the Army, led by Sagara Sōzō, was at this time marching north through the eastern mountain roads to spread the "halving of taxes" proclaimed by the revolution.


BUT...
THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS! WE--
--THE SEKIHŌ ARMY-- IS A FRAUD?!!
ORDERS...FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL...TO EVERY UNIT OF THE REGULAR ARMY... TO CAPTURE THE "FALSE ARMY, CALLED SEKIHŌ."
MY UNIT... STATIONED AT THE USUI CLIFF...WAS ATTACKED BY THE ARMY FROM SHINSHŪ...AND SLAUGHTERED!
SOB
SOB
BUT WHY ...?
GASP
WE'RE PATRIOTS, TOO...
IT'S THE TAX REFORM THEY DON'T WANT!!
IT'S NOT US--!
THEY PROMISED THEY'D HALVE ALL TAXES TO BRING FARMERS IN EACH PREFECTURE OVER TO THEIR SIDE.
BUT THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IS HAVING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, AND CAN'T STAND BY IT...
SO THEY LABEL THE SEKIHŌ ARMY AS FRAUDS AND PUNISH US--
--SO THEY CAN BURY THEIR PROMISES!

SANOSUKE. YOU WAIT HERE.
!!
SO WE'RE SAFE AND EASY FOR THEM TO DESTROY!!
OUR ARMY IS MAINLY FARMERS AND MERCHANTS ...
I WILL REPORT TO THE HEAD-QUARTERS IN SHIMO-SUWA.
WE CAN-NOT DEFY THE COM-MANDING GENERAL ...
PMP
CAPTAIN SAGARA. WHAT DO WE DO?!
CAP-TAIN ...!!
I CANNOT TAKE YOU BEYOND THIS POINT.
YOU ARE A JUNIOR SOLDIER. AND STILL YOUNG.
CAPTAIN SAGARA...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
DO NOT WORRY.
CAPTAIN ...

SAGARA SŌZŌ, CAPTAIN OF THE 1ST UNIT, THE FRAUDULENT "SEKIHŌ ARMY."
DECAPITATED FOR DECEIVING THE PEOPLE BY SPREADING RUMORS OF AN IMPOSSIBLE TAX REDUCTION.
WE MIGHT HAVE TOLERATED HIS PRETENSE AT BEING A HERO AND MOCKERY OF TRUE *PATRIOTS*. BUT BUILDING FALSE HOPE IN THE PEOPLE...
THAT WAS SHEER *VILLAINY*.

I WILL NOT LOSE--!
...NOT...TO THE MEN WHO MADE CAPTAIN SAGARA AND THE SEKIHŌ ARMY BEAR THE EVIL MARK OF "AKU."
RAIN!
I CAN'T LOSE...
GN
HIS RAGE HAS REVIVED...
SEKIHŌ ARMY ...!
DIE, BATTŌSAI !!
NOW !!
DOES THAT MEAN SOMETHING TO HIM?!
?
YES!
FSH!!

PH
MM MMM
A GOOD STRATEGY NEEDS MANY LAYERS!!
YOU THOUGHT I HAD ONLY THE ONE GUN!
B... BROTH-ER?!
KENSHIN !!
NO!!
!!
TM

READ THIS WAY
KENSHIN!
OO
OO
PAK
PING
PING
AND BLOCKED THE BULLET...!
YOU READ THE PATH...
RRG
FWAH
WELL THEN--
!!
KCH
HOW ABOUT THIS?!

YOU'RE A CLEVER ONE, BROTHER!
KRAK KRAK
THEN BREAK THEIR LEGS!
OH, YEAH ...
GOHEI, MAKE SURE THEY DON'T GET AWAY!!
"DON'T GET AWAY"...!? BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY ROPE, OR...

GET UP AND RUN!
KAORU, WHY ARE YOU SITTING THERE?!
MY LEGS...
I CAN'T...
THAT'S TOO BAD...
HEH
HYAH!!
HSH!

VS
I THOUGHT I SAID THIS WAS MY FIGHT.
I WON'T LET ANYONE INTER-RUPT!
TM
ZANZA ...
AAAA...!
A
TH
OW

I WILL NOT LOSE!
I CANNOT LOSE!!!
KIHEI...
SHF
GASP!
YOU JUST...
...DON'T LEARN, DO YOU?
.....
HEH

READ THIS WAY
THIS CLOSE, YOU'LL NEVER--
FSH
KEEP BARKING!
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYU--
DORYUSEN!!*
DORYŪSEN: "EARTH-DRAGON STRIKE"

FMP
AUGH!
YOU WERE STRUCK LIGHTLY SO YOU WOULDN'T FAINT.
YOU WILL EXPERIENCE THIS.
UGH.
ROLL
GGH.
NNG.
ROLL
ROLL
THE LIKES OF YOU SHOULD BEAR THE MARK OF EVIL.
NO...
SO SHOULD WE PATRIOTS.

YOU, THE LAST DAMN PATRIOT !!
LET'S FINISH THIS...
惡
SAGARA SANOSUKE, SURVIVOR OF THE SEKIHŌ ARMY...
KENSHIN?!
...UNDERSTOOD.
SHP
WE MUST FINISH.

The Secret Life of Characters (5)

— Sagara Sōzō —

In that Sagara Sōzō is an actual historical personage, talking about his "motif" as a character seems beside the point. Ultimately, what ended up taking precedence was Watsuki's own mental image. Sagara Sōzō (real name: *Kojima Shirō*) seems to have been an extravagant man, samurai not by birth, but scion of a wealthy family. Leaving his wife and children behind, he joined the cause as a pro-Imperialist and, as in this story, was eventually turned upon by the Imperial Army and executed (beheaded) at 29 years of age. Since he appears here within the framework of Sanosuke's memories, he is of course somewhat glorified. But Sagara Sōzō did truly see equality for all as the final objective of the revolution. What would he have thought, had he lived, had he seen what passed for "equality" during the subsequent Age of Meiji...?

The real-life "Sekihō Army (*Sekihō-tai*) Incident" is in fact little-known, and I did debate whether or not to include it. In the end, because I felt it showed so clearly the truths and the lies of the Meiji Restoration, I couldn't just skip it. A friend told me then that another friend—a popular manga creator—had cautioned that I might be "getting in too deep." There's also the fact that, while doing this storyline, the popularity of the series (in Weekly Shonen Jump) fell to its lowest point since beginning publication. Still, Watsuki did feel at the time that, in order to explore the true story of the Meiji Restoration, leaving out the story of the Sekihō Army was not an option.

Design-wise (and as mentioned above), there's not much reason to discuss "motif." Back in the previous volume, in Act Two when I drew *Yamagata Aritomo*, I couldn't get my version of the character to resemble the surviving photos of him, and so I'd had to take a different route and use imagination as my guide. (I did search for photos or other images of the real Sagara Sōzō, but never could find them. What did he look like...?) Beautiful as he was—the sun, the moon, and the stars to Sanosuke—Sagara Sōzō becomes only more popular in the eyes (and hearts) of female readers.

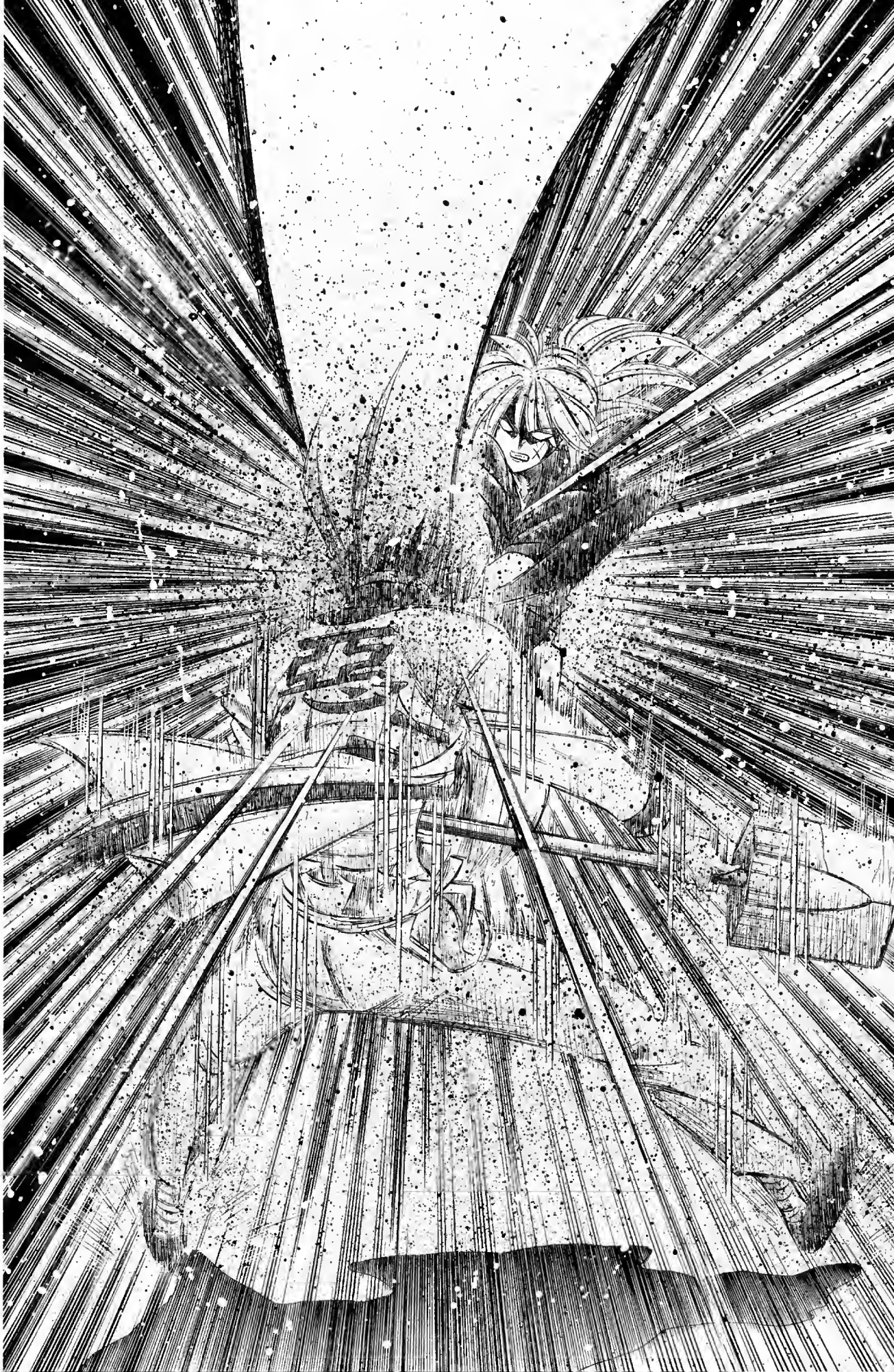
LET'S FINISH THIS, BATTŌSAI !!!
Act 8 – And Then, Another
HE'S ADDING CENTRIFUGAL FORCE TO HIS MONSTER STRENGTH...
...AND THE ZANBATŌ'S MASS!!
CENTRIFUGE !
!!
WHAT IS THAT? WHAT'S HE PLANNING TO DO?!
.....

FROM THE MOMENT THE SEKIHŌ ARMY WAS DISBANDED, I BECAME A FIGHT MERCHANT-- AND DELVED DEEP INTO COMBAT!
WHILE I ENJOYED MY FIGHTS I WAS ABLE TO FORGET EVERYTHING !!!
AND IN THESE TEN YEARS, I'VE GAINED STRENGTH !!
GIN!
WITH THAT STRENGTH, I NOW CRUSH THE GREAT PATRIOT!!!

READ THIS WAY
STILL YOU DO NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO CRUSH THIS ONE.
HYAAAA!!
KRAK!

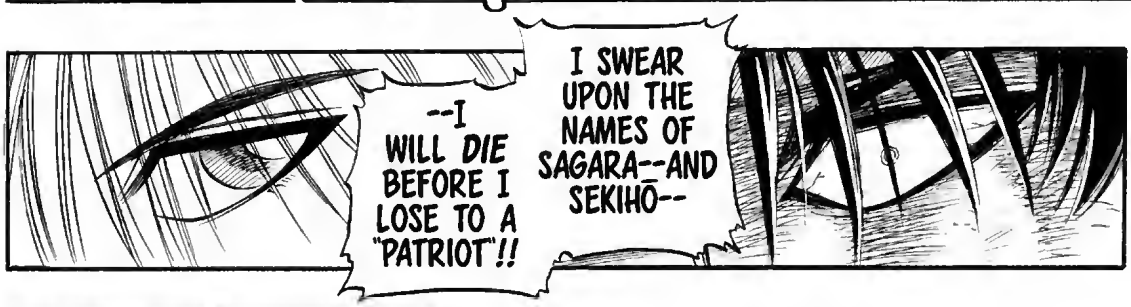
Act 8
And Then, Another

!
WHAT ?!
HE HIT HIRUMA ...!
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ--
RYŪTSUISEN.*
*RYŪTSUISEN: "DRAGON-HAMMER STRIKE"



AS HARD-HEADED AS THEY COME.
YOU SEEM...
TM
YOU ARE THE FIRST--
--TO TAKE A RYŪTSUISEN AND NOT FALL.
PHEW
BRR
YOU ARE BARELY STANDING.
BRR
WAIT HERE WHILE A DOCTOR IS CALLED.

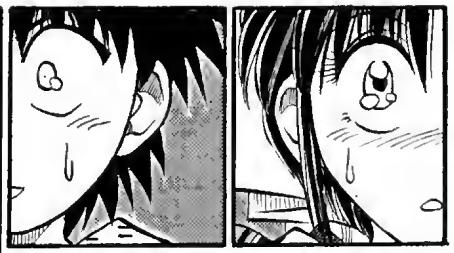
I HAVEN'T FALLEN YET!!
I HAVEN'T LOST!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
IT'S NOT-- OVER-- YET!!


I SWEAR UPON THE NAMES OF SAGARA--AND SEKIHŌ--
--I WILL *DIE* BEFORE I LOSE TO A "PATRIOT"!!

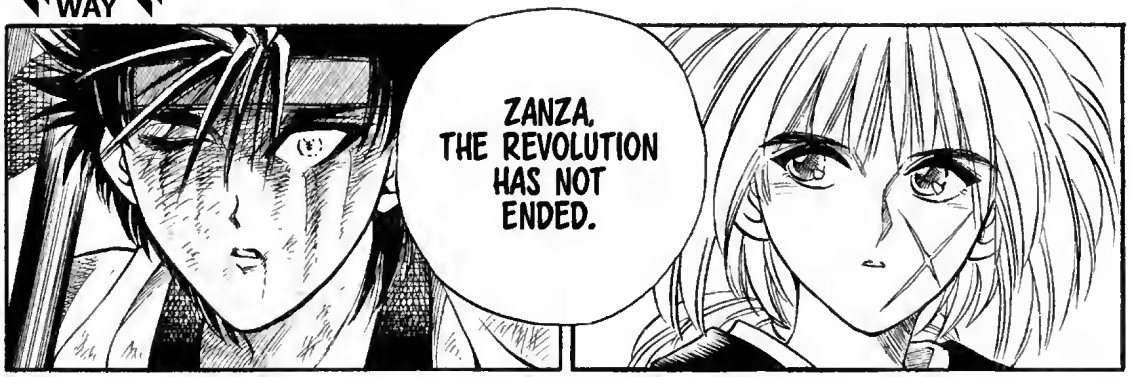
KENSHIN ...
YOU CAN'T ...
THAT'S IT, *COME!*
COME HERE!
TM

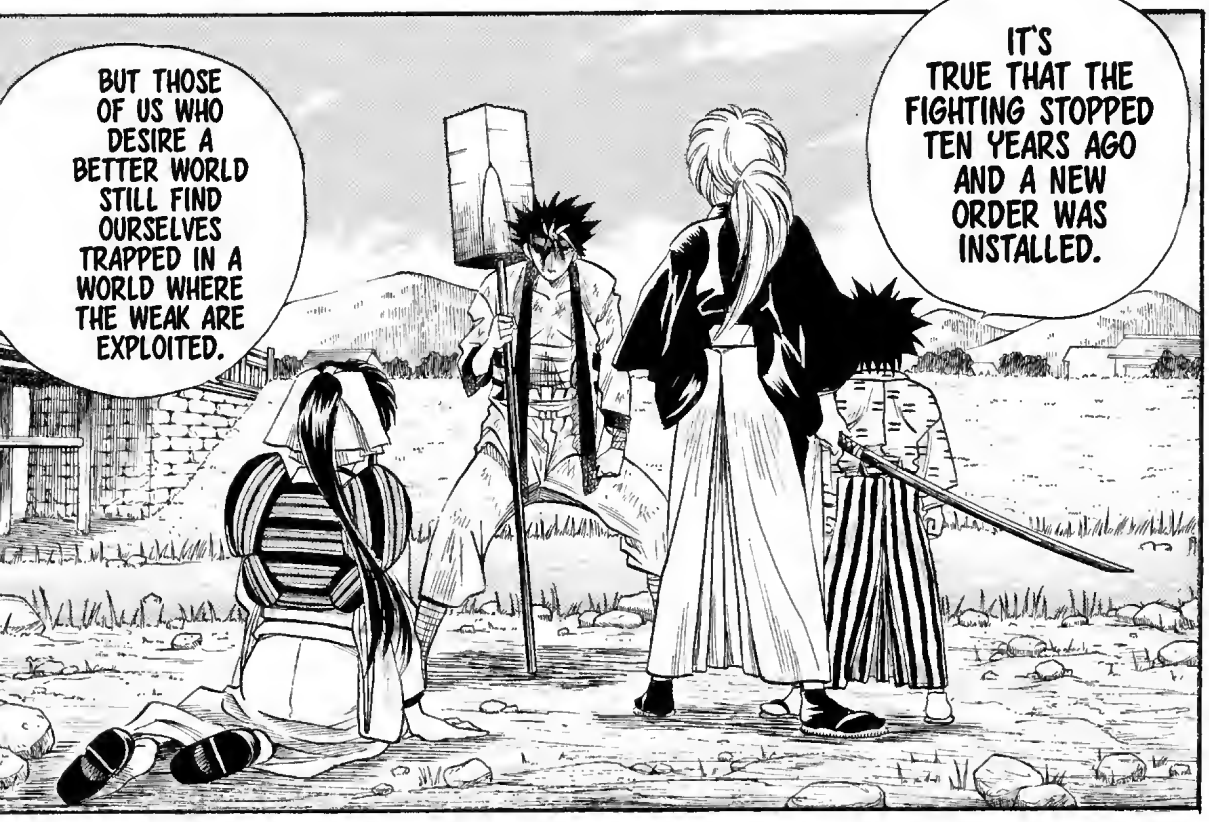
WOK
悪

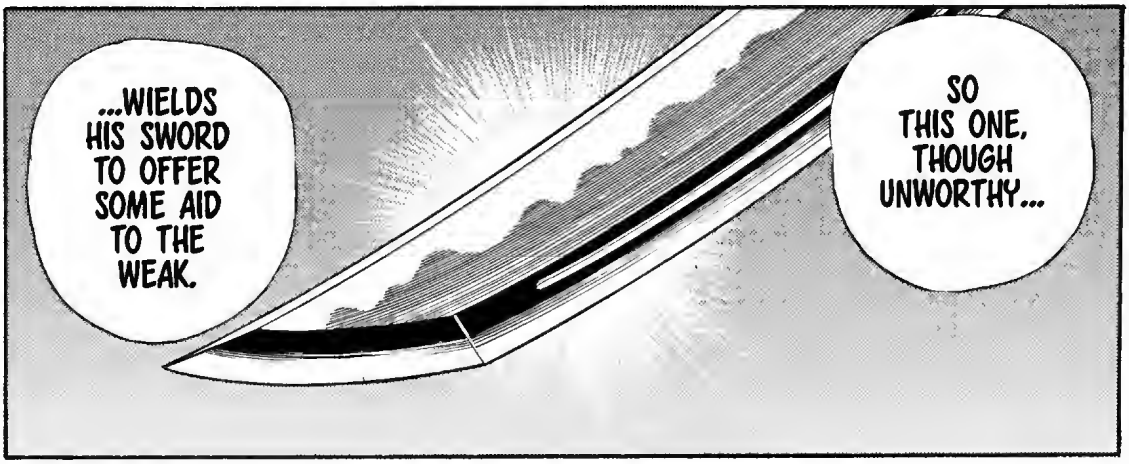
...OR DID IT TEACH YOU TO COMPLETE THE REVOLUTION?
DID THE SEKIHŌ ARMY TEACH YOU TO KILL "PATRIOTS"...
DON'T YOU HAVE THE WRONG OPPONENT?



DON'T YOU PREACH TO ME!
YOU SPOKE OF EQUALITY, BUT DROWNED IT IN YOUR OWN GREED!!
DON'T SPEAK OF REVOLUTION, *THEN* CREATE A WORLD OF LIES AND SLEEP *EASY* IN IT!!
YOU'RE WRONG!!
KENSHIN ISN'T ONE OF THOSE!
HE NEVER EVEN TOOK A POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT! HE USES HIS SWORD TO *DEFEND* PEOPLE!
YOU THINK OF KENSHIN AS *HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI* ONLY!
DON'T MAKE WILD ACCUSATIONS, NOT WHEN IT'S *YOU* WHO CAME PICKING THIS *FIGHT!!*
SHE'S RIGHT!
AND IF YOU WON'T BACK OFF, THEN I, MYŌJIN YA--
HIKO...
Let's not make this any more complicated.
VM


ZANZA, THE REVOLUTION HAS NOT ENDED.


BUT THOSE OF US WHO DESIRE A BETTER WORLD STILL FIND OURSELVES TRAPPED IN A WORLD WHERE THE WEAK ARE EXPLOITED.
IT'S TRUE THAT THE FIGHTING STOPPED TEN YEARS AGO AND A NEW ORDER WAS INSTALLED.


...WIELDS HIS SWORD TO OFFER SOME AID TO THE WEAK.
SO THIS ONE, THOUGH UNWORTHY...

...NO ONE CAN SAY, BUT THIS IS MY METHOD OF GIVING PAYMENT TO THE PEOPLE WHO SACRIFICED FOR THE MEIJI REVOLUTION.
WHETHER IT WILL BE ONE YEAR, OR TEN...
...OR AN ETERNITY BEFORE THE REVOLUTION IS ATTAINED...
...HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI.
PAYMENT TO THOSE WHO WERE KILLED BY...
THIS MAN IS THE SAME.
...AS CAPTAIN SAGARA, WHO FOUGHT FOR THE TRUE NEW AGE HE SAW IN HIS DREAMS.
YOU'RE SO LAME.
STILL TOO WEAK?
SHUT UP!
HE'S THE SAME.
.....
HE CONTINUES TO FIGHT.
AND STILL...

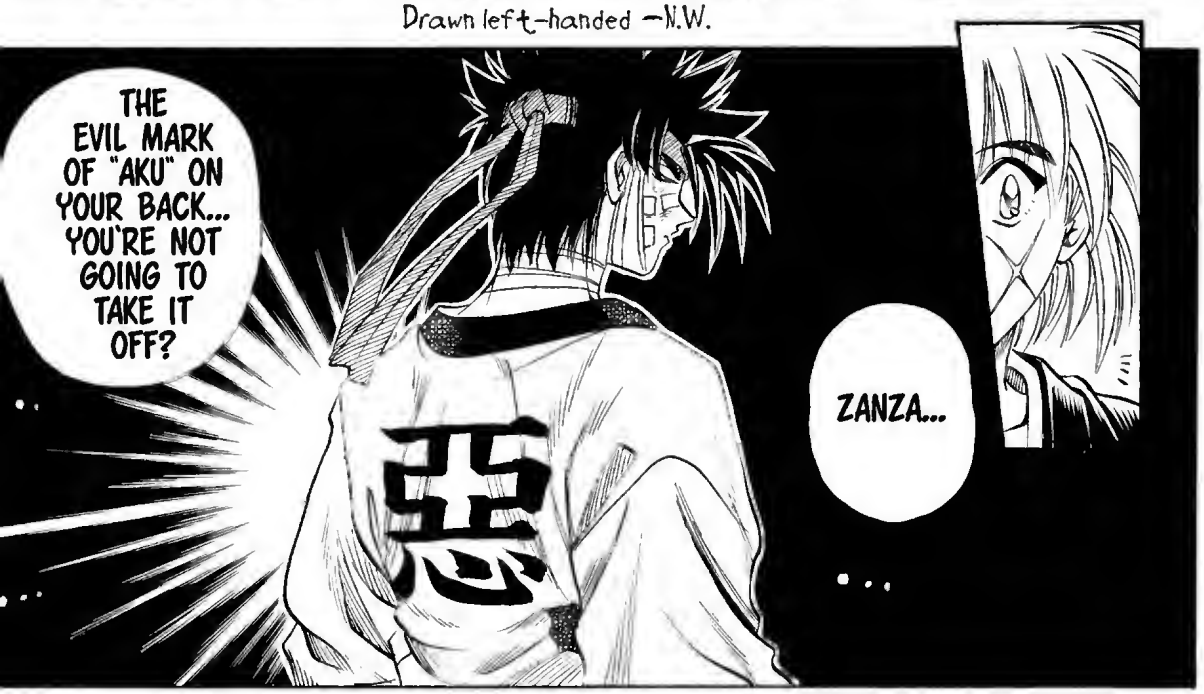
READ THIS WAY
HEH
DROWNING MYSELF IN FIGHTING TO TRY AND FORGET IT ALL.
I LOST HOPE AND GAVE UP.
CAPTAIN SAGARA.
I AM SORRY...
I WAS SO UTTERLY...
BY THIS MAN...
...BEATEN.
NANA?

THE NEXT DAY...
I HEAR ZANZA'S WOUNDS ARE PRETTY BAD.
INTERNAL BLEEDING, ANEMIA, THREE MONTHS OF HOSPITALIZATION. IT'S A WONDER HE DIDN'T DIE.
HE WAS MY STONGEST FOE IN QUITE A WHILE.
YADA YADA YADA
HARDLY EVEN PULLED MY PUNCHES.
TK
TK
HMM...
BUT WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE YOUR BATTLE-EXPRESSION?
UM... WELL...
IT'S A BIT ODD, ACTUALLY. YOU SEE...
PING
PING
GW ! WH
MY MUSCLES ARE STUCK...
AHEM
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE MY EYES WERE NARROWED INTO THIS "DEATH GLARE" AND...WELL...

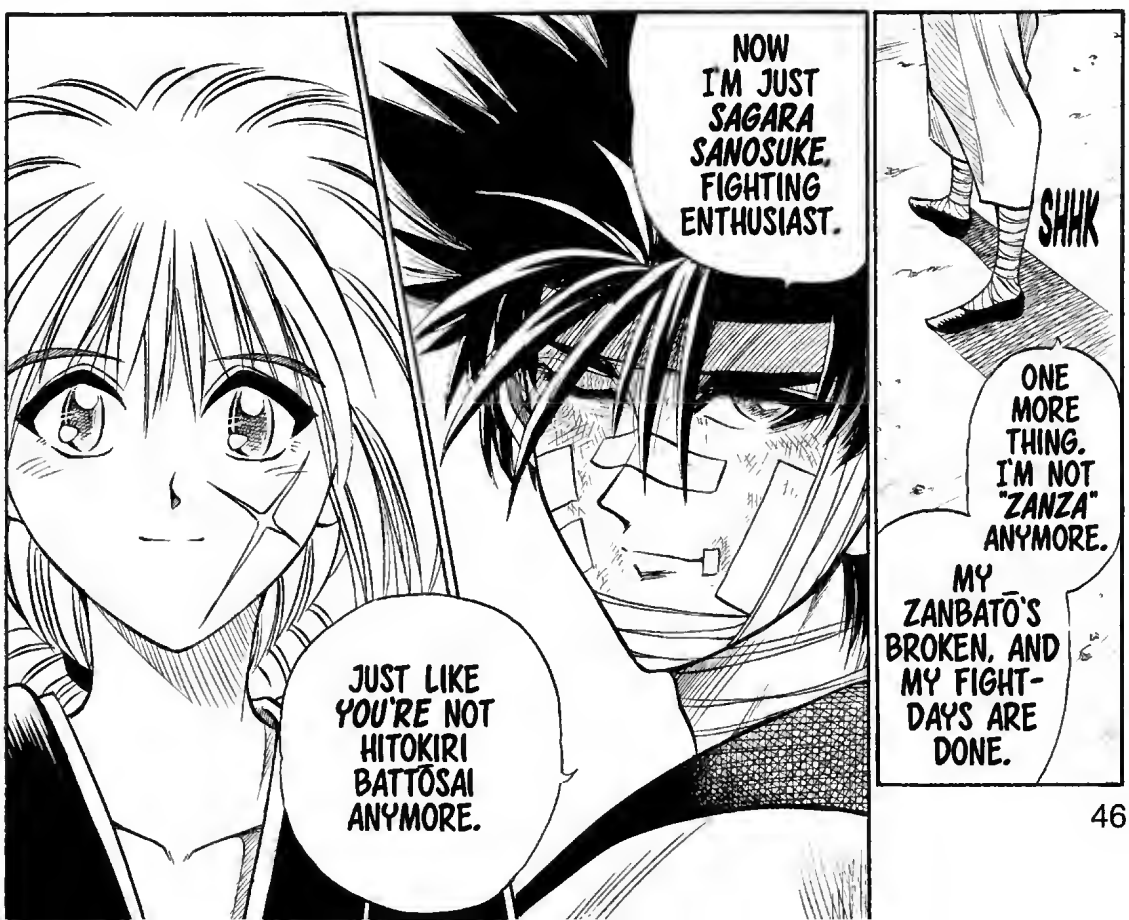
READ THIS WAY
AGAIN? NOBODY LIKES FAT GIRLS.
BETTER THAN A POINTY-EYED MIDGET.
こべ赤
ANYHOW, THAT CONCLUDES THIS INCIDENT.
LET'S GO CELEBRATE AT THE BEEF-BOWL HOUSE.
THIS IS THE FACE YOU NEED AS RUROUNI KENSHIN.
ORO!
OKAY, YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL.
BUT IT HURTS...
TP
TP
OFF TO GET PRIME SEATS.
COME WHEN YOU'RE READY.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!! This girl will teach you a lesson.
BOK
BOK
BOK
OH, YEAH!? The girls love this pointy-eyed midget.
DOM!

READ THIS WAY
EEYAAH?!
NOT YOU, TOO!
BING
ORO! YOU AGAIN.
EEEEE!
DM DM
MM. I OWE YOU FOR YESTERDAY.
ZANZA!!
WEREN'T YOU HOSPITAL-IZED...
MY SELLING-POINT IS MY TOUGH-NESS.
FEH
THIS ONLY HELPS BUSINESS.
.....
POP
I DON'T MIND YOU GETTING DRUNK AND STARTING ANOTHER FIGHT...
BUT COULD YOU TRAIN A BIT, BEFORE THE NEXT ONE?!
!!

Drawn left-handed —N.W.



牛鍋
...I'M GOING TO STICK AROUND AND SEE WHO YOU *REALLY* ARE.
TO SEE IF YOU REALLY *ARE* DIFFERENT FROM THOSE "ISHIN SHISHI," WITH THEIR EMPTY IDEALS...


NOW I'M JUST *SAGARA SANOSUKE*, FIGHTING ENTHUSIAST.
JUST LIKE *YOU'RE* NOT HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI ANYMORE.
SHHK
ONE MORE THING. I'M NOT "*ZANZA*" ANYMORE.
MY ZANBATŌ'S BROKEN, AND MY FIGHT-DAYS ARE DONE.

SO, DON'T YOU START WANDERING AGAIN WITHOUT MY PERMISSION...
...KENSHIN!

ANOTHER WEIRD ONE...
HOOO...

YOU'RE THE WEIRDEST OF ALL.
GN
NG
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ANOTHER"?!

ORO!
SANOSUKE-SAN SKIPPED OUT ON HIS BILL AGAIN...
TAE

The Secret Life of Characters (6)

Sagara Sanosuke

If you're a Shinsengumi fan, you've probably figured this one right away: Sanosuke's motif is Captain of the Shinsengumi's 10th division, *Harada Sanosuke*.

Harada Sanosuke was among the top five best-looking guys in the Shinsengumi...despite his depiction as "chubby" in (well-known historical novelist) *Shiba Ryōtarō*'s "*Moeyo Ken* (Burn, O Sword)"—Watsuki's bible! A spear-wielder of great strength and forever fighting, Harada Sanosuke was active in every decisive battle of the Shinsengumi. Rough-mannered and short-tempered, he also had a softer side—due, perhaps, to his humble beginnings. He was considerate of his comrades and took special care with subordinates. Quick to pass judgment and prone to seeing things in black and white, Harada Sanosuke can probably be thought of as the kind of "big brother" character so common in manga for young men. Accepted history states that he was K.I.A. during the Ueno War, but legend has him crossing the continent (to China) and becoming chief of his very own bandit army. To his contemporaries, no doubt, he must have cut quite a dashing figure; obviously, Watsuki liked him quite a bit as well, and wanted him for *RuroKen*. Thus was born Sagara Sanosuke.

Sano's popularity has been climbing of late, and that's a good thing. But as the *Rurouni Kenshin* character voted "Most Likely to Have His First Name Mangled" (I see people writing the *kanji* for "Sanosuke" with the "*Sa-*" wrong, the "*-no*" wrong, the "*-suke*" wrong...even, in one case, writing it "*Sasuke*"?!), all I can say is, C'mon, people—he's not a *ninja!* (Sad...so sad.)

***Visual Motif*: People are also always assuming he's based on such-and-such a character from such-and-such a manga series (he's not, though I'm a big fan of such-and-such series, myself). The model for Sano is actually the main character "Lamp" from "*Mashin Bōken Tan Lamp-Lamp* (Arabian Genie Adventure Lamp-Lamp)" by *Obata Takeshi*, the *Hikaru No Go* artist. As for where *that* all started, that was with me, doodling in sketchbooks during my days as an assistant, adding and subtracting then eventually calling it Sano—with blessings from the original artist, of course.**

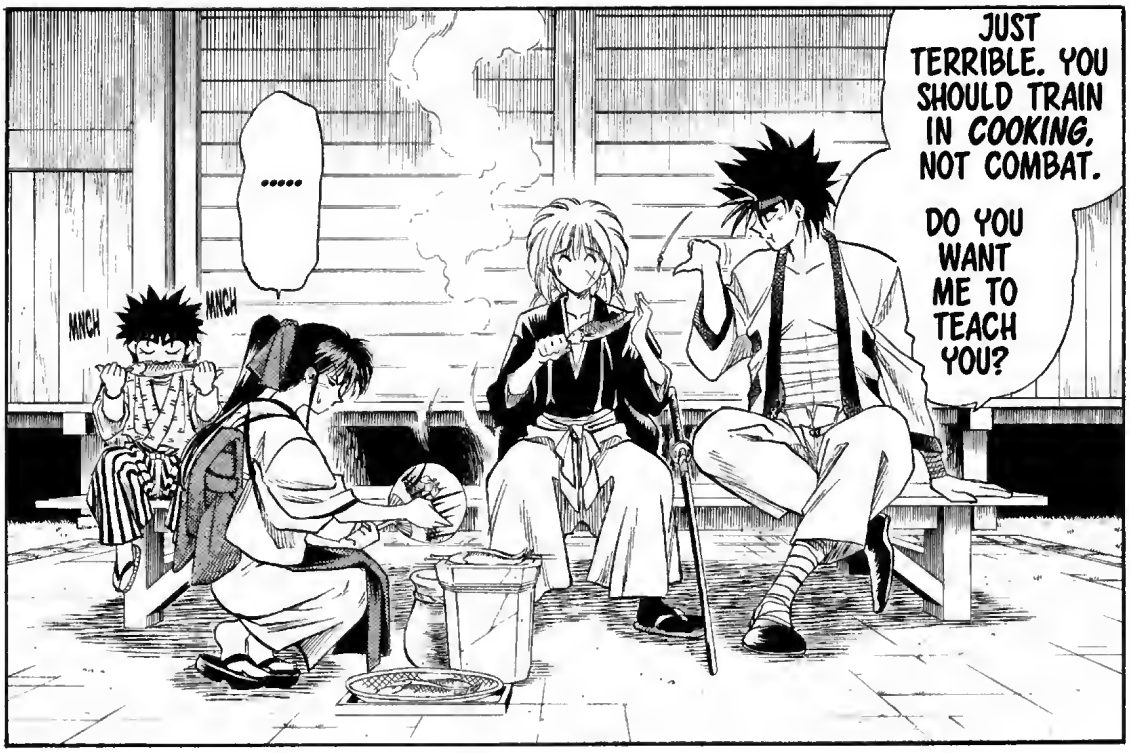
Act 9 – Kurogasa

ZASH
GYAAA
VSH
EEEEE!!
DHM
!?
DIE.
UHU-
HU-
HU.
UHU.
WH-
WHAT?
I
CAN'T
MOVE!
AAH.
AA.
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?!

READ THIS WAY

Act 9
Kurogasa

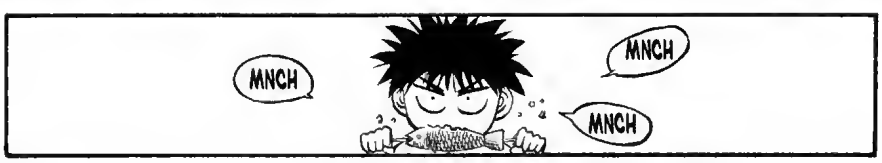
PNG
TERRIBLE.


JUST TERRIBLE. YOU SHOULD TRAIN IN COOKING, NOT COMBAT.
DO YOU WANT ME TO TEACH YOU?
.....
MNCH
MNCH

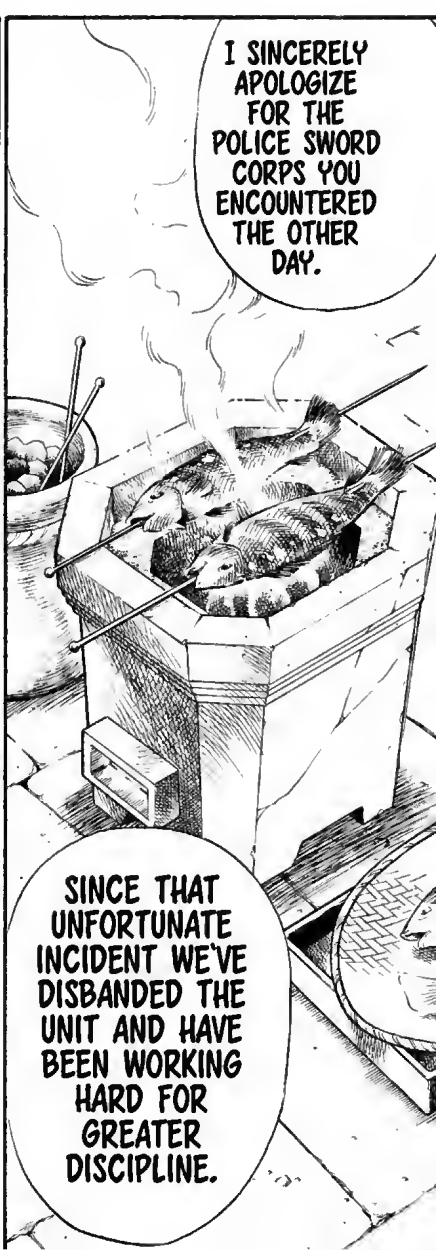
KENSHIN, YOU MUST GET TIRED, EATING THIS EVERY DAY.
TIRED, NO.
EACH TIME, IT TASTES SO MUCH BETTER.
OH-H-H... LIKE AN ACQUIRED TASTE.
y'mean like head cheeSe ?
SNAP

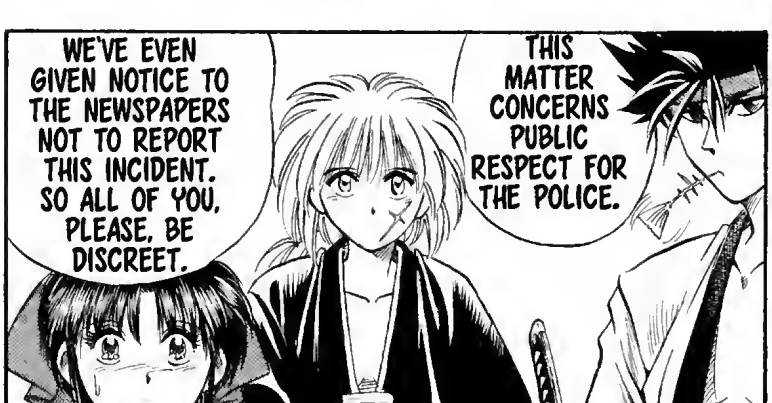
See Vol. 1, Act 2 -N.W.

ORO?

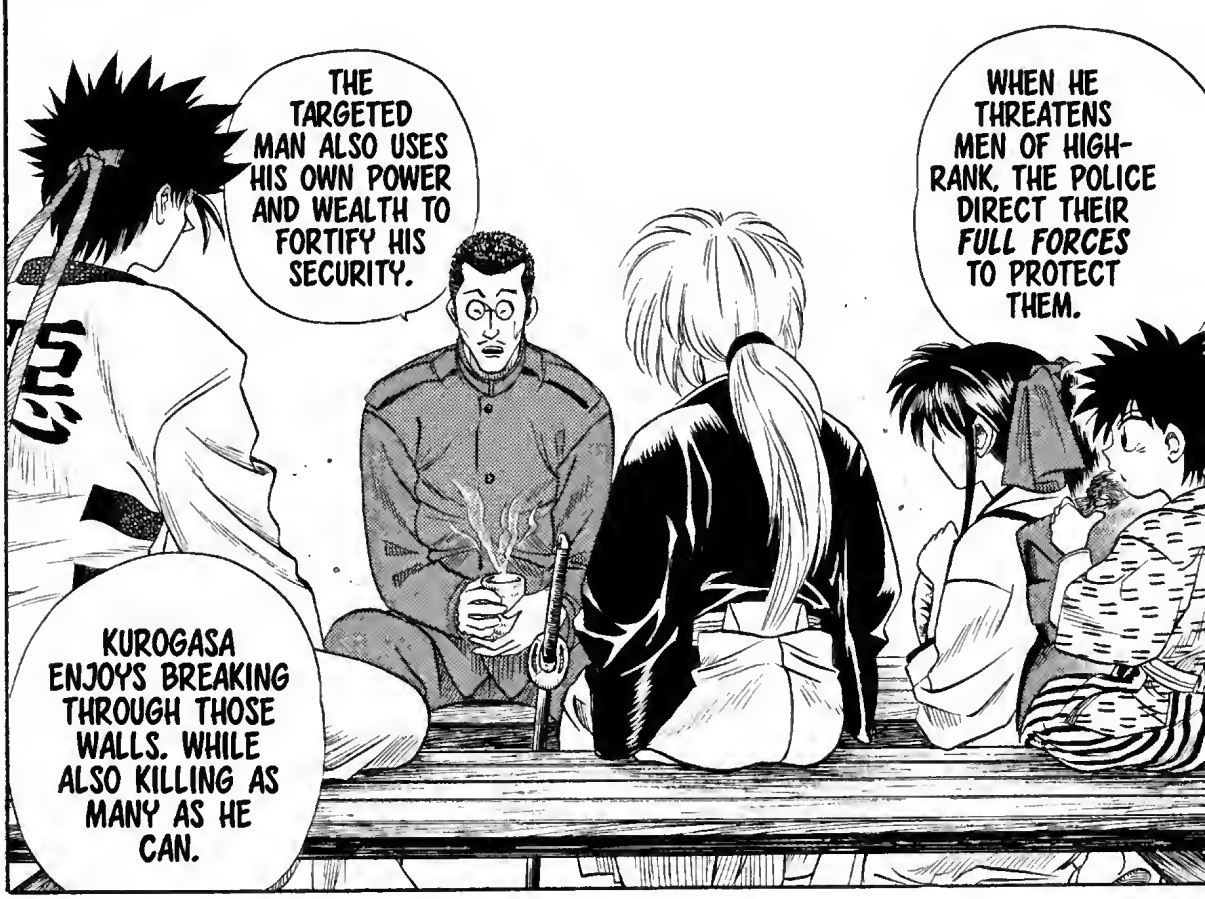

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH

BEFORE I BEGIN, I HAVE ONE WORD ...
AND WHAT DO YOU NEED OF THIS ONE?
THAT'S GOOD NEWS.


I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE FOR THE POLICE SWORD CORPS YOU ENCOUNTERED THE OTHER DAY.
SINCE THAT UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT WE'VE DISBANDED THE UNIT AND HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD FOR GREATER DISCIPLINE.

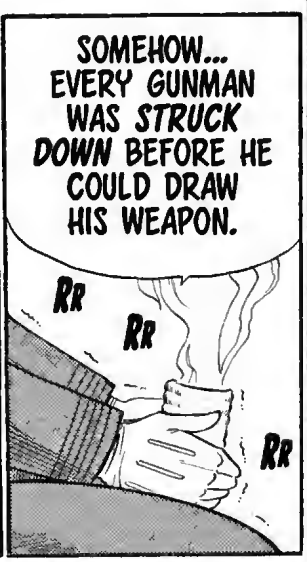

WE'VE EVEN GIVEN NOTICE TO THE NEWSPAPERS NOT TO REPORT THIS INCIDENT. SO ALL OF YOU, PLEASE, BE DISCREET.
THIS MATTER CONCERNS PUBLIC RESPECT FOR THE POLICE.

MURDERER ?
...IS FOR HIMURA-SAN TO BRING DOWN A MURDERER.
THE FAVOR WE NEED...
OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS HE HAS APPEARED ALL OVER THE NATION REPEATING HIS HORRENDOUS DEEDS. HE IS A GREAT SWORDSMAN AND HAS NOT FAILED IN ANY OF HIS ATTEMPTS...WHICH NOW NUMBER IN DOUBLE-DIGITS.
CALLED *KUROGASA*. A SERIAL KILLER WHO TARGETS FORMER REVOLUTIONARY WARRIORS NOW ACTIVE IN THE GOVERNMENT OR ECONOMY. HE SENDS A THREAT LETTER AND THEN STRIKES.
BUT ABOVE ALL... HE *ENJOYS* THE KILLING.
BOTH ARE POSSIBLE.
...IS IT DUE TO A GRUDGE? OR POLITICS?
IF HE'S TARGETING FORMER ISHIN SHISHI, THEN...


THE TARGETED MAN ALSO USES HIS OWN POWER AND WEALTH TO FORTIFY HIS SECURITY.
WHEN HE THREATENS MEN OF HIGH-RANK, THE POLICE DIRECT THEIR FULL FORCES TO PROTECT THEM.
KUROGASA ENJOYS BREAKING THROUGH THOSE WALLS. WHILE ALSO KILLING AS MANY AS HE CAN.

WAIT...IF YOU KNOW YOU'RE UP AGAINST A SWORDSMAN LIKE THAT...
...YOU MUST'VE USED GUNMEN.
THEN HOW COULD SO MANY...?

TWO MONTHS AGO, WHEN HE APPEARED IN SHIZUOKA...
...34 POLICE AND GUARDS WERE KILLED, AND 56 WERE CRITICALLY WOUNDED.


SOMEHOW... EVERY GUNMAN WAS STRUCK DOWN BEFORE HE COULD DRAW HIS WEAPON.
RR
RR
RR

WHEN THOSE WHO DID NOT DIE INSTANTLY WERE QUESTIONED, THEY SAID THEIR BODIES HAD BEEN SUDDENLY PARALYZED.
AND, IN THAT MOMENT-- THEY WERE SLASHED.

The voice-actors of (the CD book) "Rurouni Kenshin":

Himura Kenshin	Ogata Megumi
Kamiya Kaoru	Sakurai Tomo
Myōjin Yahiko	Takayama Minami

Sanosuke's not in the group because the CD book is based on the first four manga chapters only. Sorry, Sanosuke fans! Even so, you should check it out. Really! Besides, with the start of the anime, you can check him out there. (You believe me, don't you?) Despite all my worries, then—and even though the casting was Watsuki-hands free!

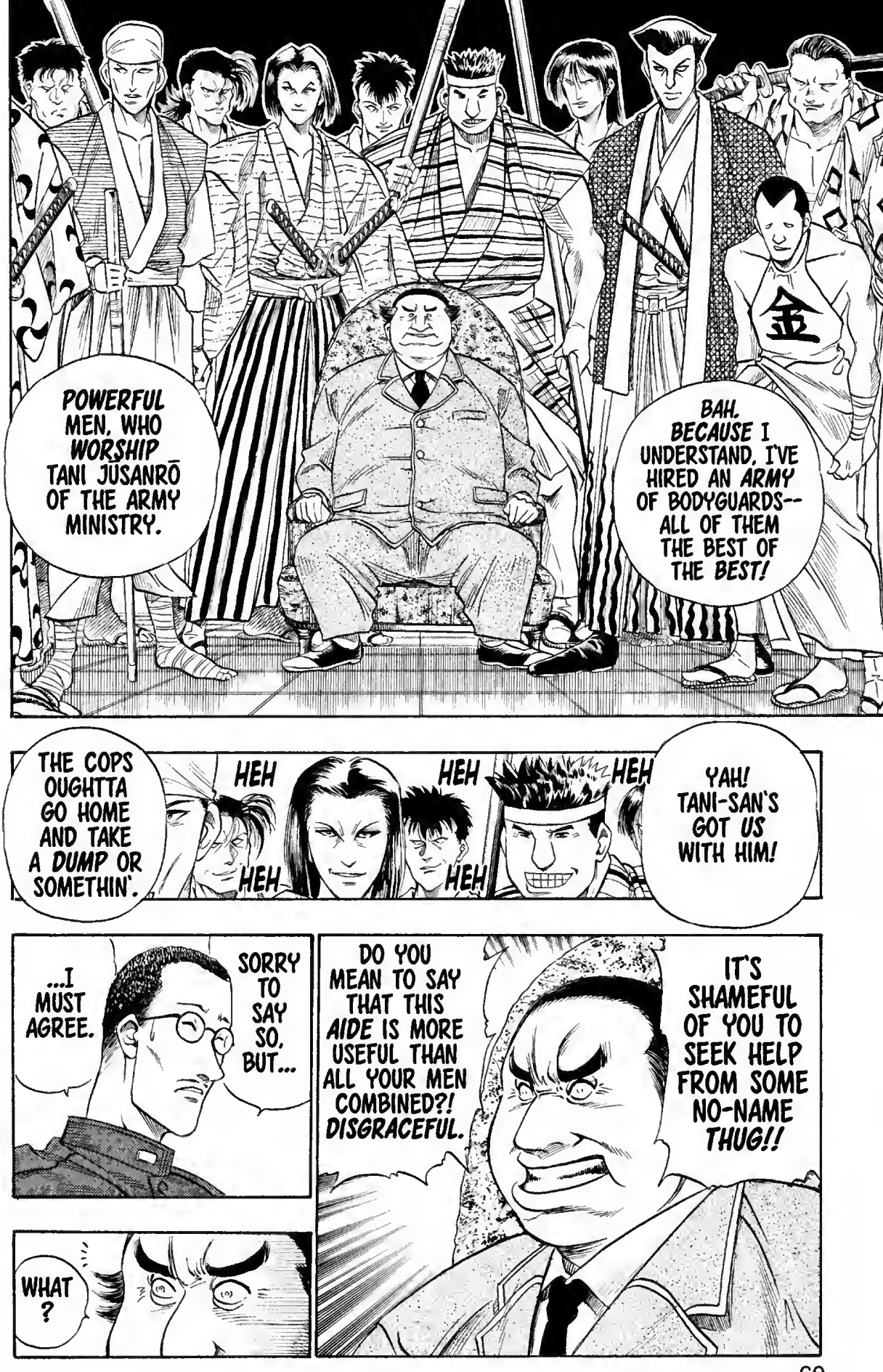
—I'm thinking it works.

...to be continued

和月伸宏

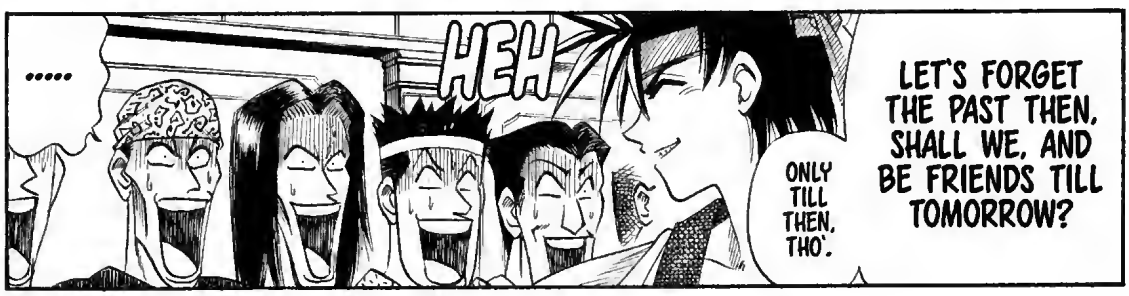
IF A MAN KILLS TOO MANY, TOO LONG...
...HE LOSES HIS ORIGINAL PURPOSE AND HAS HIS HEART *STOLEN* BY THE COLOR AND SMELL OF *BLOOD.*
THAT A MAN COULD BE LIKE THAT STILL...AFTER TEN YEARS OF MEIJI...
KENSHIN...
.....
SLURP

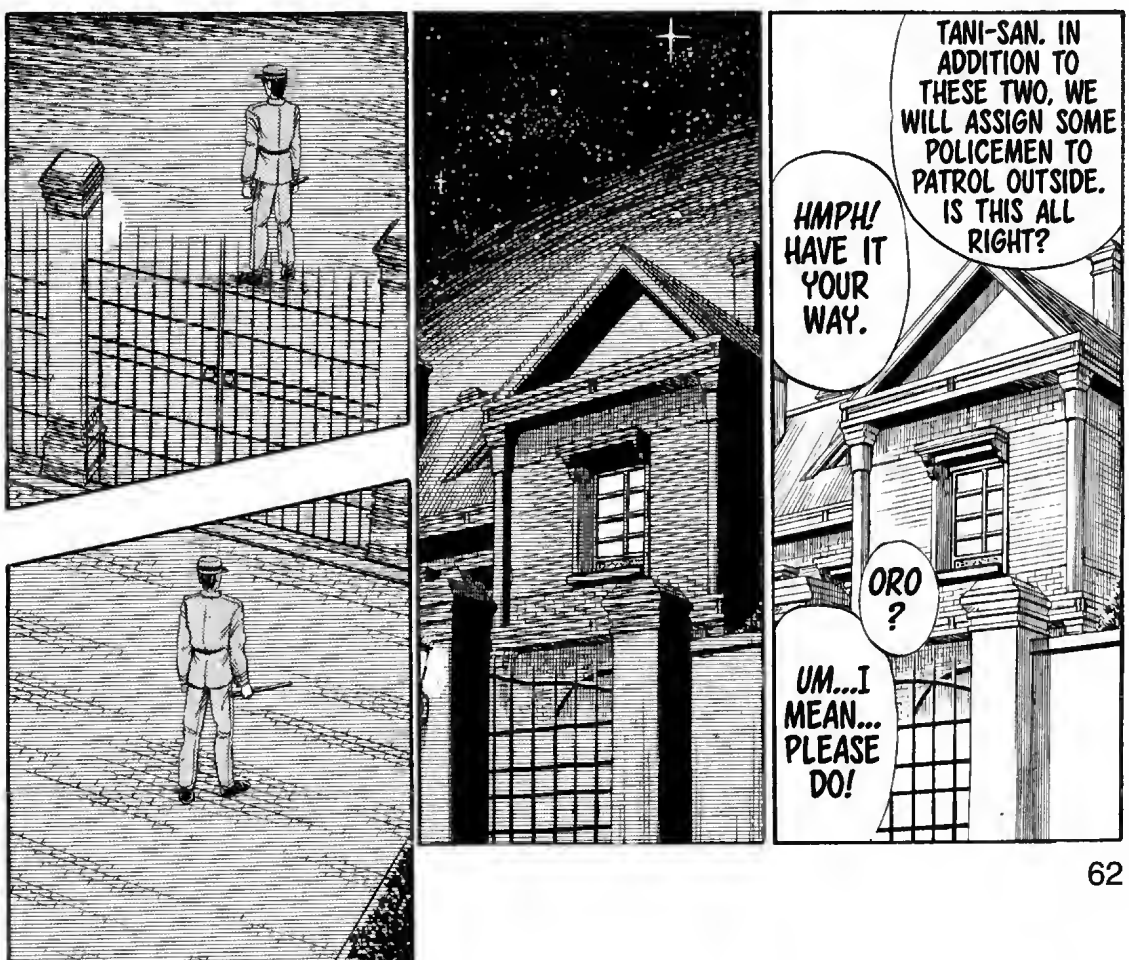
*SATSUJIN-KEN: MURDEROUS SWORD TECHNIQUE

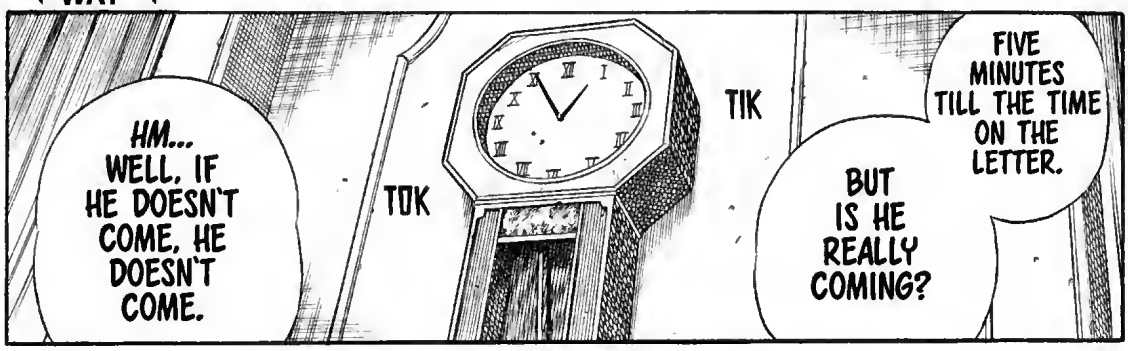

POWERFUL MEN, WHO WORSHIP TANI JUSANRŌ OF THE ARMY MINISTRY.
BAH. BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND, I'VE HIRED AN ARMY OF BODYGUARDS-- ALL OF THEM THE BEST OF THE BEST!
金
THE COPS OUGHTTA GO HOME AND TAKE A DUMP OR SOMETHIN'.
HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH
YAH! TANI-SAN'S GOT US WITH HIM!
...I MUST AGREE.
SORRY TO SAY SO, BUT...
DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT THIS AIDE IS MORE USEFUL THAN ALL YOUR MEN COMBINED?! DISGRACEFUL.
IT'S SHAMEFUL OF YOU TO SEEK HELP FROM SOME NO-NAME THUG!!
WHAT ?

READ THIS WAY
OHH
GRI
LISTENING TO TANI-SAN, HE'S APPPARENTLY BECOME A VERY BIG MAN.
QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE MAN WHO WAS UNDER MY CONSTANT PROTECTION THROUGH THE FOREST OF SWORDS AND THE RAIN OF BULLETS.
GAA!!
GAA-GAH!!
I REMEMBER BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF 'EM!
HMP
HUH...THIS IS THE "BEST OF THE BEST"?

HEH
IT MUST BE DISAPPOINTING TO HAVE A NO-NAME THUG AS A GUARD.
BUT PERHAPS YOU COULD ENDURE IT FOR JUST ONE NIGHT.
AHEM
Q-QUITE AN HONOR, REALLY ...
AHEM
O-OF COURSE.

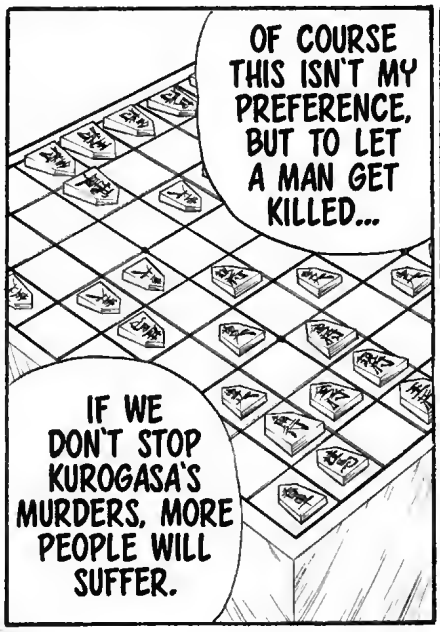

HEH
.....
LET'S FORGET THE PAST THEN, SHALL WE, AND BE FRIENDS TILL TOMORROW?
ONLY TILL THEN, THO'.


TANI-SAN. IN ADDITION TO THESE TWO, WE WILL ASSIGN SOME POLICEMEN TO PATROL OUTSIDE. IS THIS ALL RIGHT?
HMPH! HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
ORO ?
UM...I MEAN... PLEASE DO!


TIK
TOK
FIVE MINUTES TILL THE TIME ON THE LETTER.
BUT IS HE REALLY COMING?
HM... WELL, IF HE DOESN'T COME, HE DOESN'T COME.

THE GIRL AND THE KID MUST BE ASLEEP BY NOW.
HRK
YES. SHE SAID SHE'LL WAKE EARLY AND READY THE BATH FOR OUR RETURN.

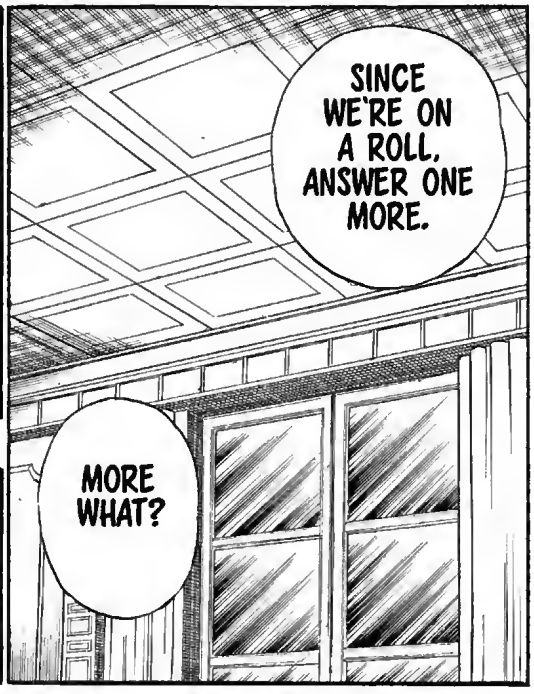
INCLUDING KUROGASA HIMSELF...
PAK

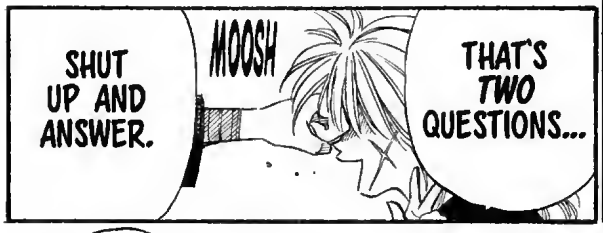

OF COURSE THIS ISN'T MY PREFERENCE, BUT TO LET A MAN GET KILLED...
IF WE DON'T STOP KUROGASA'S MURDERS, MORE PEOPLE WILL SUFFER.

BUT, KENSHIN, WHY DID YOU ACCEPT THIS MISSION?
HRK
I THOUGHT... WELL, THAT THE "BATTŌSAI" THING WAS OVER.
HM...

THO' IT'S HARDLY A "SQUABBLE"...
NO WAY I'D LET AN INTERESTING SQUABBLE LIKE THIS GO ON WITHOUT ME.
AND YOU, SANOSUKE... WHY SO WILLING TO HELP?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO KUROGASA IS?
THAT "NIKAIDŌ-IPPŌ" THING YOU SAID EARLIER.


SINCE WE'RE ON A ROLL, ANSWER ONE MORE.
MORE WHAT?


SHUT UP AND ANSWER.
MOOSH
THAT'S *TWO* QUESTIONS...

LET'S SAY THERE'S A HUNCH...
ONE HEARD TEN YEARS AGO.
...BUT AT THIS POINT NO PROOF.

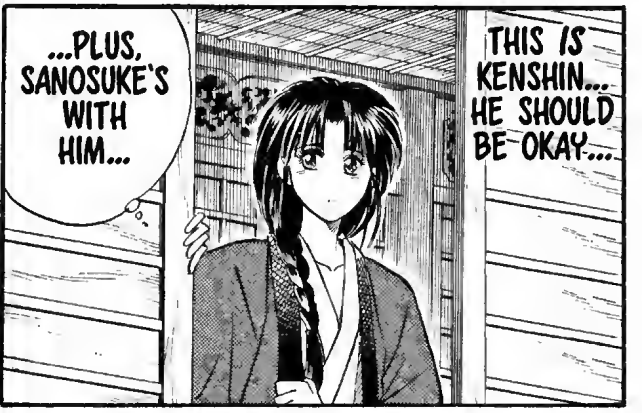
...IT'S A RUMOR.
RUMOR?

ZAASSSSSS
YAAAAAAGH!
BAM
TM
TM
WH-WHAT WAS THAT SCREAM?!
TM
TM
IT WASN'T INSIDE--IT'S FROM OUT THERE!!

SANO, WE'LL TAKE THE FRONT.
THE REST OF YOU, GET BEHIND US!!
HE'S COMING !!
TK
IN SHŌGI, THE KING STAYS IN THE MIDDLE!
HEEL KICK!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU PORK BUN!
UH!
DM TM .....
DM
AH?
TM
OH ?
EH ?
.....
Harshness!-NW.
BOHNNNNNNNNNNG

HNNNNNG
ONE O'CLOCK...
...NOT COMING?
HEH, JUST AN EMPTY THREAT.
PHEW

!!!
UHU-HU-HU... LOOK AT THE BUGS...
SNEER
YOU WANNA LIVE...GO FIND A ROCK.
GYAH!!



Act 10—One Side of the Soul

Act 10
One Side of the Soul

14...15 OF YOU.
LESS THAN I THOUGHT.
1...
2...
3...
.....

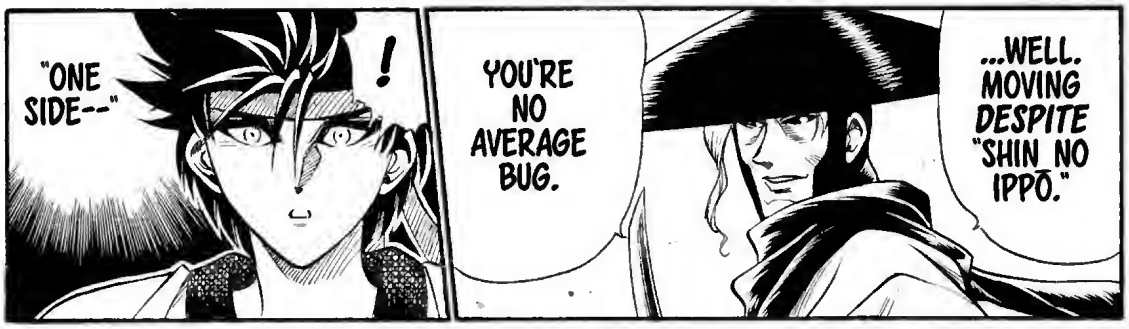
SO THAT'S KUROGASA.
YEAH, THOSE ARE KILLER'S EYES...
YOU SEE IT TOO, SANO?
THE FIRST MOVE IS MINE. YOU LOOK AFTER TANI-DONO.

HURRY UP AND KILL HIM!
WHAT ARE YOU ALL STARING AT?!
EARN IT!!
AREN'T I PAYING YOU ENOUGH?!
FIVE TIMES!
HEH
HRRR
THE ONE WHO GETS HIM IS PAID FIVE TIMES OVER!
HEH
OFFICER!
AND, I'LL GET YOU AN ARMY-OFFICER POST!

NO, IT'S FOR ME!!
-D-D-D-D-D-
THAT'S FOR ME!!
YOUR OWN GREED WILL COST YOU YOUR LIVES!!
IDIOTS--!!
UHU.
UHU-HU-HU.
UHU-HAH-HAH-HAH!

GET BACK!! YOU WEAKLINGS DON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
HE'S FAST! NOT KENSHIN'S GRACE--BUT EFFICIENT.
MMM...
WAAH!
EEEEE!
UM
THIS FEELING... SO SWEET.

YOU CANNOT RUN!!
DOMM
!?
WHAT HAPPENED --?
MY BODY WON'T MOVE!!
YOU... CANNOT... RUN.
ONCE WE DRAW SWORDS ON EACH OTHER, WE SWING UNTIL ONE IS DEAD.
NOTHING ELSE WILL SATISFY.
DM
DM
DM
YAAH!
EEE!
AH... AH...
WH... WHAT DID YOU DO?!
MY BODY SUDDENLY GOT HEAVY!
DOM
DOM



*ISUKUMI=PARALYZING TERROR

Even Watsuki, who watches anime yet knows little of anime voice-actors, knows (Kenshin "CD book" voice-actor) Ogata. That is how good and popular she is. To be fair, quite a few fan letters mention how well her voice fits (indicating, to me, how many "Kenshin" readers were also reading a certain, other, super-popular manga...and how sad and complicated a realization is that!). Given that Watsuki had imagined Kenshin's voice more "neutral," it's a good thing, having Ogata bring his voice to life.

...to be continued

READ THIS WAY

IN KYOTO DURING THE BAKUMATSU, THERE WERE RUMORS OF A MAN...

A HITOKIRI WHO TOOK ASSASSINATION JOBS FOR MONEY, WITHOUT ATTACHMENT TO ANY PARTICULAR PREFECTURE.

HE WAS A MASTER OF SWORDS IN THE *NIKAIDŌ HEIHŌ* STYLE.

Nikaidō Heihō
A style of three forms, represented by the *kanji* or "Chinese characters" for "one," "eight," and "ten." Iconographically, the three join to create the "forced" character "*hei*," thus "Heihō."

(八) eight (はち)

(一) one (いち)

(十) ten (じゅう)

Most feared aspect? "One Side of the Soul," ***Shin no Ippō***...which only its founder, Nikaidō, could use.

TO USE "SHIN NO IPPŌ" AS A WEAPON IS NOT SURPRISING.

PTG

BUT TO TRAP MEN WHO'VE LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT, AND THEN SLAUGHTER THEM...

...THAT IS CRUELTY UNWORTHY OF...

Shin-no Ippō—
A secret technique to paralyze, in which the user casts "chi" into the eyes of his opponent.

It is said that the technique was not passed down to the next generation. In modern terms, we might think of it as a kind of instant hypnosis, perhaps.

...THE LONE HITOKIRI...

UDŌ JIN-E.

I HAVE ALSO HEARD A RUMOR...

A LEGENDARY MAN WITH A BIG CROSS-SHAPED SCAR ON HIS LEFT CHEEK.
A PATRIOT OF CHŌSHŪ, USING SOME ANCIENT SWORD-STYLE CALLED HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

HIMURA-SAN!!
!!
THE "HITOKIRI"... HIMURA BATTŌSAI!!
DAH

SHIN NO IPPŌ ISN'T MAGIC--IT'S MORE A BATTLE OF WILLS.
AND WHEN THAT WILL IS MATCHED, IT CANNOT WORK.
!
POW
HAAH!
WHAT MORE COULD I ASK?
BATTŌSAI AS MY OPPONENT.
GIVE UP PEACE-FULLY, JIN-E.
FWP
BUT ...
EEE!
OR ELSE YOU WILL HAVE TO FACE THIS ONE.
!

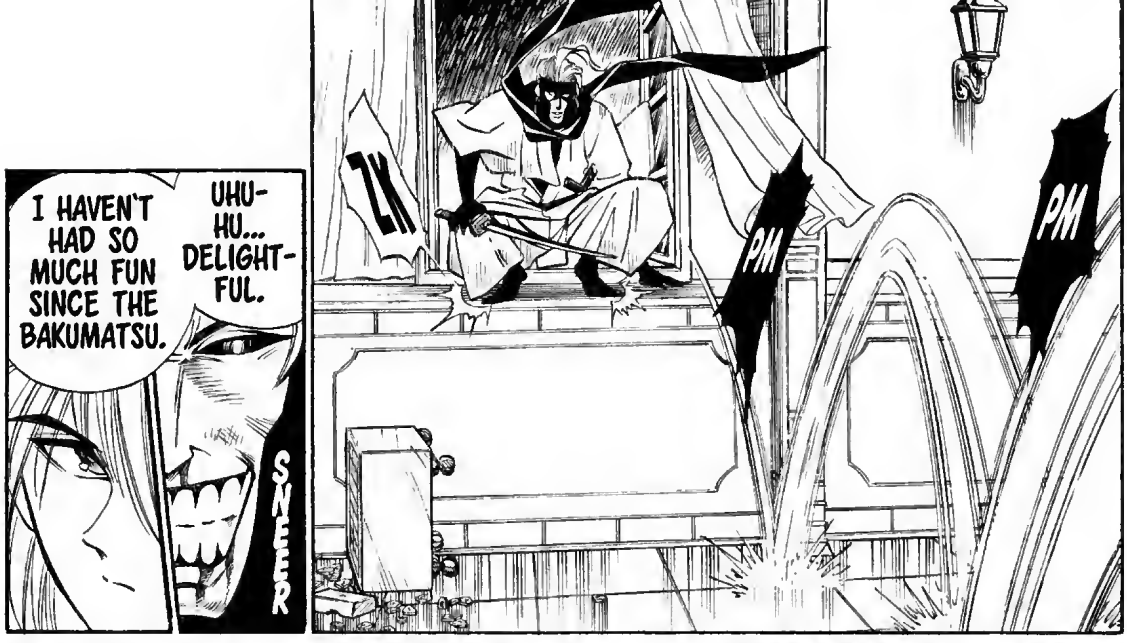
AIEEEE!
...NOT UNTIL AFTER I FULFILL THE PROMISE OF MY LETTER.
TANI-DONO... BREAK THE SPELL. FOCUS YOUR WILL!
BLAST IT!
DM
NO USE! THIS OBESE, ROTTEN PIG CAN NEVER DO IT.
ONCE THEY WOULD PAY ME A HUGE SUM TO KILL.
NOW THEY CALL IT A CRIME.
DEATH TO THE "PATRIOT" SWINE!!

POW
RRAH!
SANO!
!
CHECKMATE ...?
DN
NOT YET, YOU DON'T !!

READ THIS WAY
!
UHU-HU-HU.
HOW'S THAT ?!
DS
AUGH!
HUH-HAH-HAH-HAH !!

UHU-HAH-HAH-HAH!!
KOG
JIN-E!
BIN
BUNG
BIN
BIG

DM
!?
I CAN MOVE AGAIN!!
POW
!
WOW!
FUH
EE


I HAVEN'T HAD SO MUCH FUN SINCE THE BAKUMATSU.
UHU-HU... DELIGHT-FUL.
SMIRK
ZK
PM
PM

--THE PATRIOT, HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI !!
PNG
I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.
MY NEXT TARGET IS YOU--

YOU'D BEST GET A SWORD THAT IS NOT A SAKABATŌ... AND WAIT FOR ME.
HWP
I WILL APPEAR BEFORE YOU SOON.

READ THIS WAY
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SANO?
"HELPS BUSINESS," REMEMBER?
SUCK-ING IT UP.
HIMURA-SAN...
CHIEF, PLEASE TEND TO THE WOUNDED.
IF WE'RE LUCKY, THEY'LL SURVIVE.
Y-YES...
BUT, HIMURA-SAN...
NOW YOU'RE HIS TARGET.
KENSHIN...YOU TOOK THIS JOB BECAUSE YOU KNEW...
...THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
...ACTUALLY, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN FINISHED HERE AND NOW.
BUT HE WOULDN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
SHEEN
YES... IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
--THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL MAKE IT EASY.
WITH JIN-E, THE KUROGASA--

READ THIS WAY

Act 11 – The Ribbon That Binds

NEXT MORNING
TWEE TWEE
THIS MUST BE THE FIRST TIME KUROGASA'S CAUSED SO LITTLE CARNAGE.
SIX WOUNDED SERIOUSLY, THREE LIGHTLY.
NINE PEOPLE TOTAL. THAT, WE CAN'T BE HAPPY ABOUT.
DON'T BE GREEDY. NOBODY DYING... THAT IS A VICTORY.
BUT WE HAVE THE BEST FIGHTER OF ALL, SO IT'LL END SOON.
OPTIMIST
NOT NECESSARILY.
POM POM POM
That hurts.
KUROGASA... UDŌ JIN-E.
AN EX-HITOKIRI, NOW INSANE.

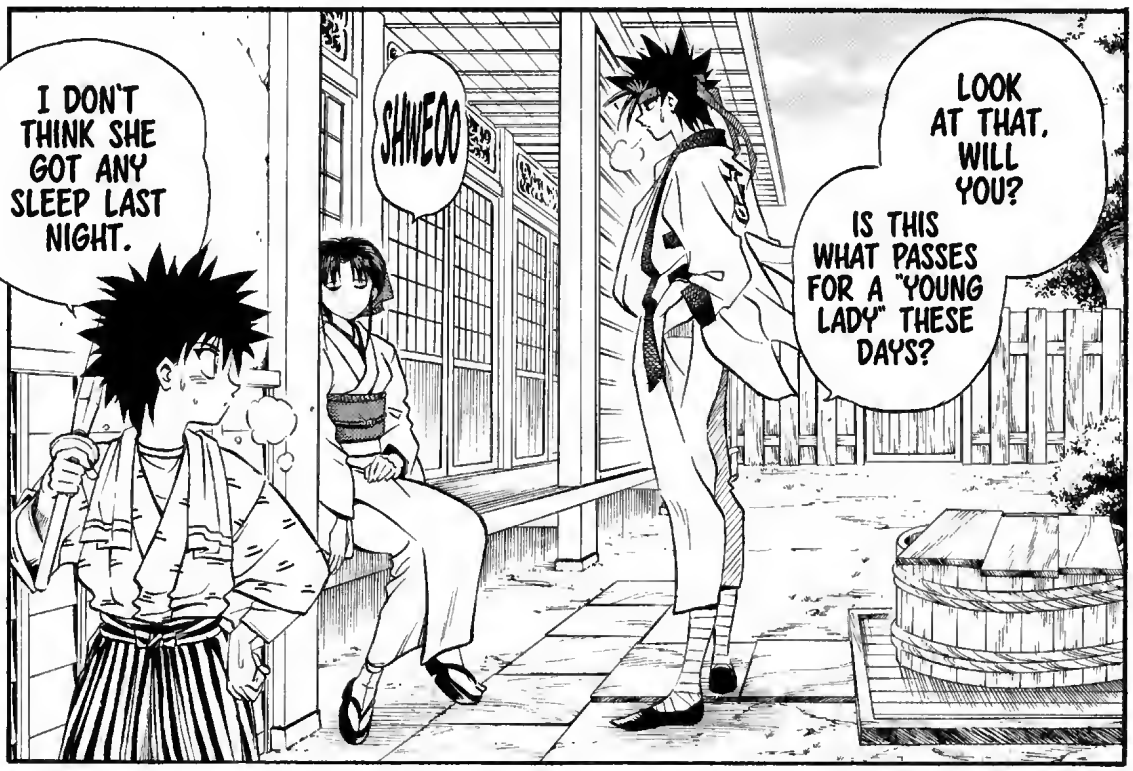
AS "HITOKIRI," THE DIFFERENCE...
...IS HUGE.
FOR TEN YEARS THIS ONE HAS AVOIDED BATTLE TO THE DEATH.
HE, HOWEVER, HAS PUSHED HIMSELF TO KILL AND KILL.
--THE PATRIOTS' *NIGHTMARE!*
THE SHINSENGUMI! THE BEST SWORDSMEN, FIGHTING FOR THE SHŌGUN--
WHEN OR WHERE JIN-E MASTERED NIKAIDŌ HEIHŌ, THIS ONE KNOWS NOT.
BUT HE FIRST APPEARED IN KYOTO DURING THE BAKUMATSU AS A MEMBER OF THE SHINSENGUMI.
WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO BE DISCIPLINED BY HIS UNIT, HE RETALIATED AND *ESCAPED* THE SHINSENGUMI.
INDEED, HE KILLED *PLENTY* OF PATRIOTS-- BUT HE ALSO KILLED A LOT OF PEOPLE HE *WASN'T* SUPPOSED TO.
SEVERAL MONTHS LATER HE REAPPEARED ON THE *PATRIOTS'* SIDE...THIS TIME AS HITOKIRI.

KILLING FOR THE SHŌGUN, THEN THE EMPEROR. NOT EXACTLY AN IDEALIST.
ALL JIN-E HAS LEFT IS HIS DESIRE TO KILL.
IT'S A VERY DANGEROUS HITOKIRI...
...WHO CARES ONLY FOR KILLING.
MAYBE THERE'S NO ROOM FOR ME IN THIS ONE.
NO. AS HIS TARGET, THIS ONE MUST FACE HIM ALONE.

IN EXCHANGE, THERE'S A FAVOR...
...TO ASK OF YOU.
KAMIYA KASSHIN-RYŪ KENJUTSU DOJO

SHIKARI

...FEH.


I DON'T THINK SHE GOT ANY SLEEP LAST NIGHT.
SHWEOO
LOOK AT THAT, WILL YOU?
IS THIS WHAT PASSES FOR A "YOUNG LADY" THESE DAYS?

AHA HA HA!!
I SAID, WAKE UP!

PAP
NN...
HEY. "MISS." WAKE UP.
PAP

HMM...
IZZAT SO?

WHIP WHIP
HEY? WHERE'S KENSHIN?
YEP. I'M BACK.
PONG
WELCOME HOME.

KENSHIN WON'T BE BACK.

THE ASSASSIN HAS TARGETED HIM NOW.
HE ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF THE PLACE IN HIS ABSENCE.
HE WON'T RISK COMING BACK AND GETTING US INVOLVED TILL IT'S OVER.

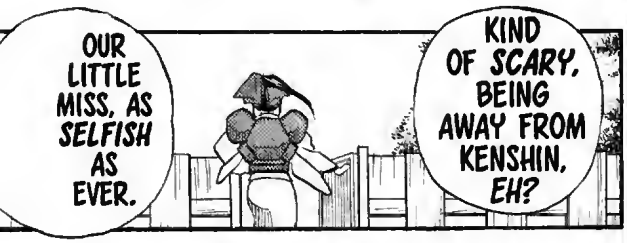
I didn't know who Sakurai was—sorry, my bad!—so, when I asked a friend, I found out she was also voicing the heroine of a new anime series to start that fall. Eventually, I watched it, and thought she was good—not too high, not too low. That "not too airhead-y" tone was close to what Watsuki had imagined for Kaoru's voice..."bang on," I'd thought. Takayama, they tell me, is "Kiki" in "The Witch's Delivery Service" (I'm sorry, I really do not know voice-actors). She's got a lot of energy, and is a great fit for "the kid," Yahiko.

...to be continued

WHERE AM I GOING?! TO FIND KENSHIN !!
DON'T BE STUPID !!
JIN-E IS NO ORDINARY ENEMY! LOOK WHAT HE DID TO ME!
IF YOU DO FIND KENSHIN, YOU'LL ONLY WEIGH HIM DOWN WITH MORE WORRIES.
WHAP
THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO FOR HIM IS STAY.

SO THEN, AFTER HE FIGHTS JIN-E...
...WHAT IF HE DOESN'T COME HOME, AND GOES OFF TRAVELING AGAIN?
—THIS ONE IS A RUROUNI. MY NEXT DESTINATION IS UNKNOWN, EVEN TO MYSELF.—
FATHER DIED...
...AND KIHEI BETRAYED ME.
IF KENSHIN LEAVES ON TOP OF THAT...
GGG

I'D RATHER BE IN DANGER...
...THAN BE ALONE AGAIN!


KIND OF SCARY, BEING AWAY FROM KENSHIN, EH?
OUR LITTLE MISS, AS SELFISH AS EVER.

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE "LOVE" AND "SELFISH" ...
HEH
...ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

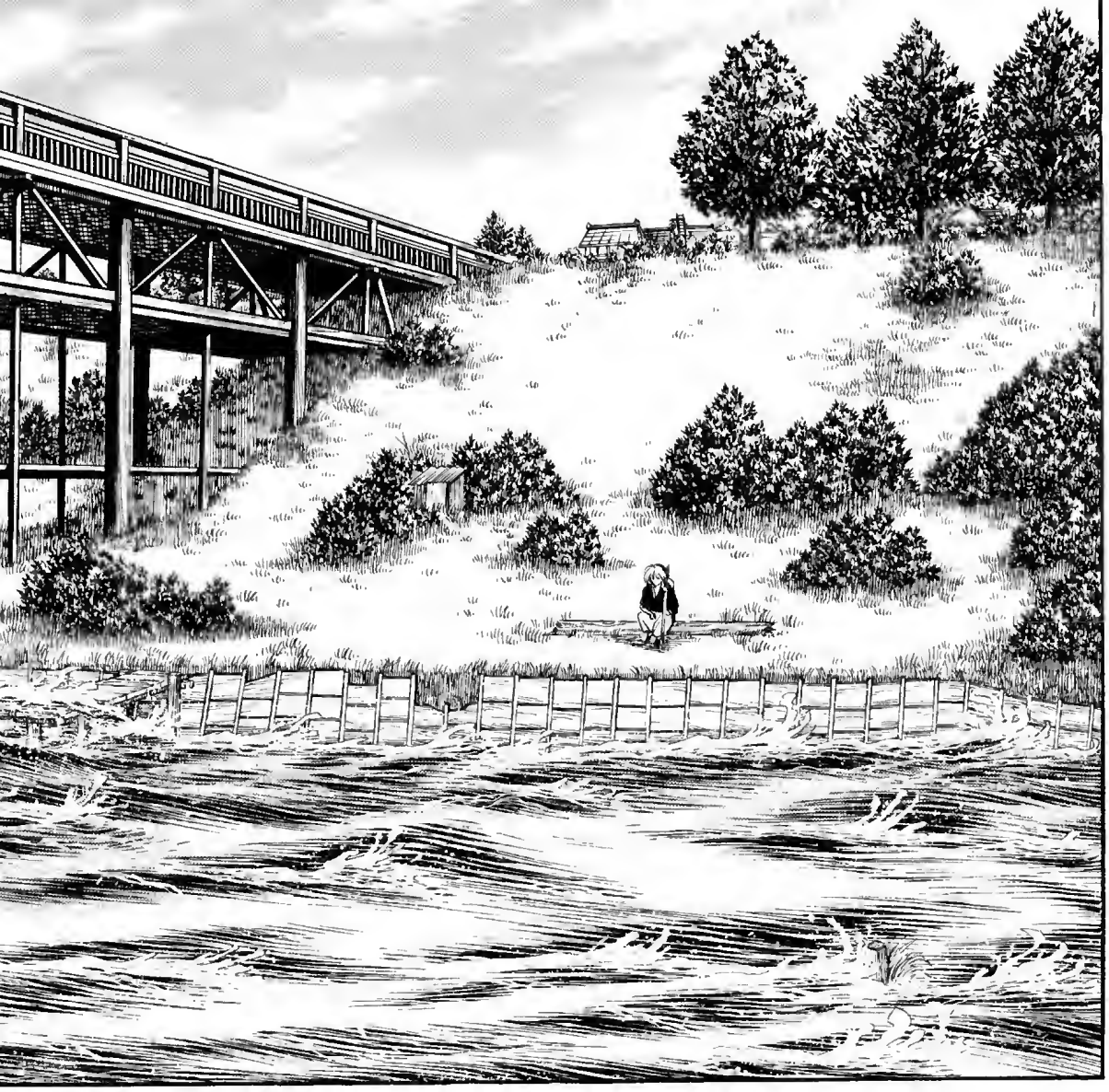
HUH. "ALONE AGAIN," SHE SAYS.
SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU?
WHATEVER.
CAN'T EXPECT TO COMPARE WELL TO KENSHIN ...
...JAPAN'S #1 GUY.

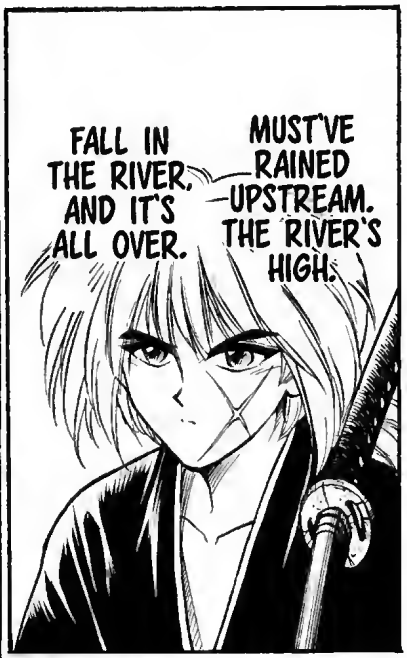
TH

OH, SO THAT MAKES ME #3?!
NOT THAT I CARE...
GOT THAT?!
BUT #2 IN JAPAN IS ME!

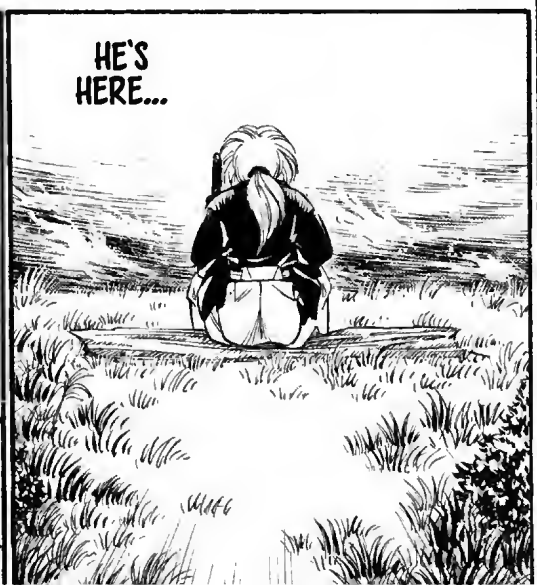
UHU!
PTT
SNEER
UHU-HU-HU.
"RIVER-BANK." MWAH-HA-HAH!
GLINT
I'M SURE KENSHIN WILL SEND HER BACK WITHIN THE HOUR.
I'M OFF FOR A BATH, AND A NAP.
YAWN!
KENSHIN PUT YOU IN CHARGE, NOT ME. SHAME!

SSSSSHHHHHH



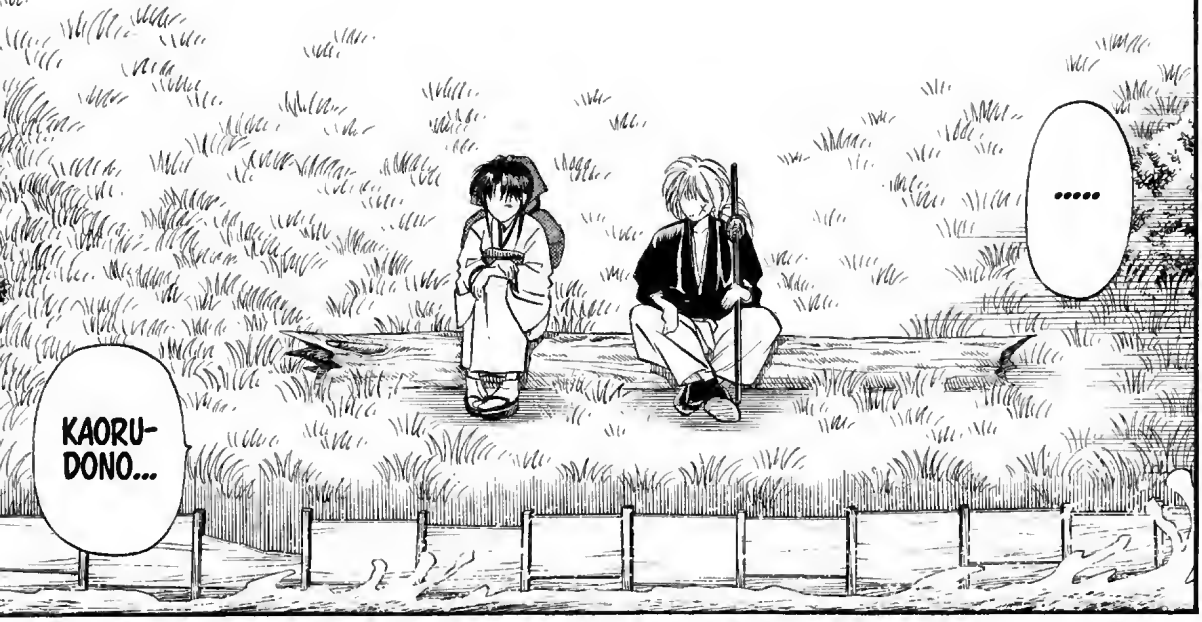

MUST'VE RAINED UPSTREAM. THE RIVER'S HIGH.
FALL IN THE RIVER, AND IT'S ALL OVER.

KLK


HE'S HERE...

HERE YOU ARE.
HF
HF
KENNN-SHIIIIN!
RRRRRRRRRRRR
HF
HF
HF
ORO!
SPYOO
PLOP
...SCARIER THAN JIN-E.
BABUMP BABUMP BABUMP

SANOSUKE TOLD ME--
--YOU DON'T PLAN TO RETURN TO THE DOJO FOR A WHILE.
THEN I WON'T GO BACK EITHER.
I'LL STAY WITH YOU.


.....
KAORU-DONO...

...YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT JIN-E.
I'VE HEARD, BUT I'M NOT LEAVING.

NO!
OR WITH YAHIKO ?
DID YOU FIGHT WITH SANO, OR SOMETHING ?

THIS ONE CAN NEVER DEFEAT JIN-E...
...WHILE PROTECTING SOMEONE ELSE.

KAORU-DONO?
SWP
FWSH
SP
MY FAVORITE BLUE RIBBON...
TAKE IT.
"TAKE IT?" BUT WHAT COULD...
?
JUST TAKE IT!
FINE! YES MA'AM !!
BUT THIS IS JUST A LOAN.
YOU HAVE TO GIVE IT BACK.
? ? ? ? ? ?

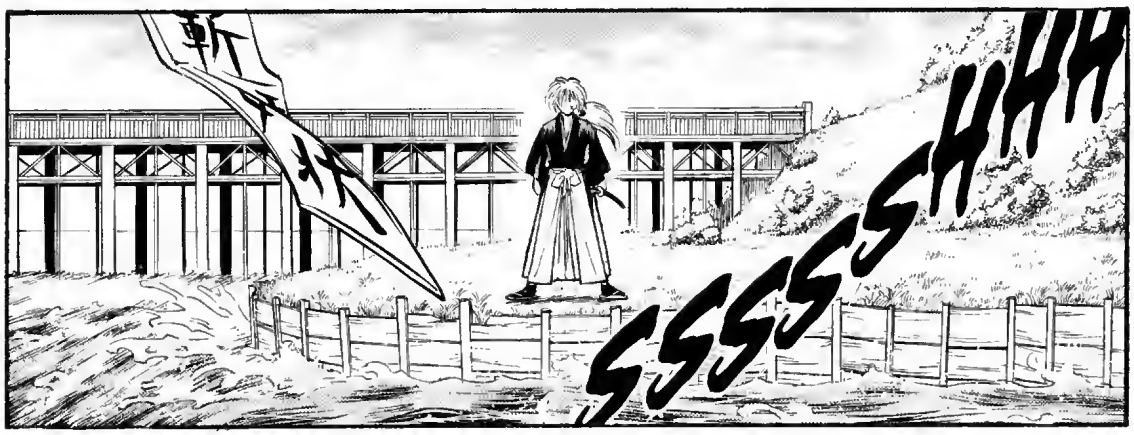
FINE. THIS ONE WILL BRING IT RIGHT BACK.
SO YOU GO HOME AND WAIT FOR ITS RETURN.
HEH HEH
DON'T YOU FORGET AND WANDER OFF, AFTER YOU DEFEAT JIN-E.
I'D NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THAT.
HEH
...I'LL DO THAT.

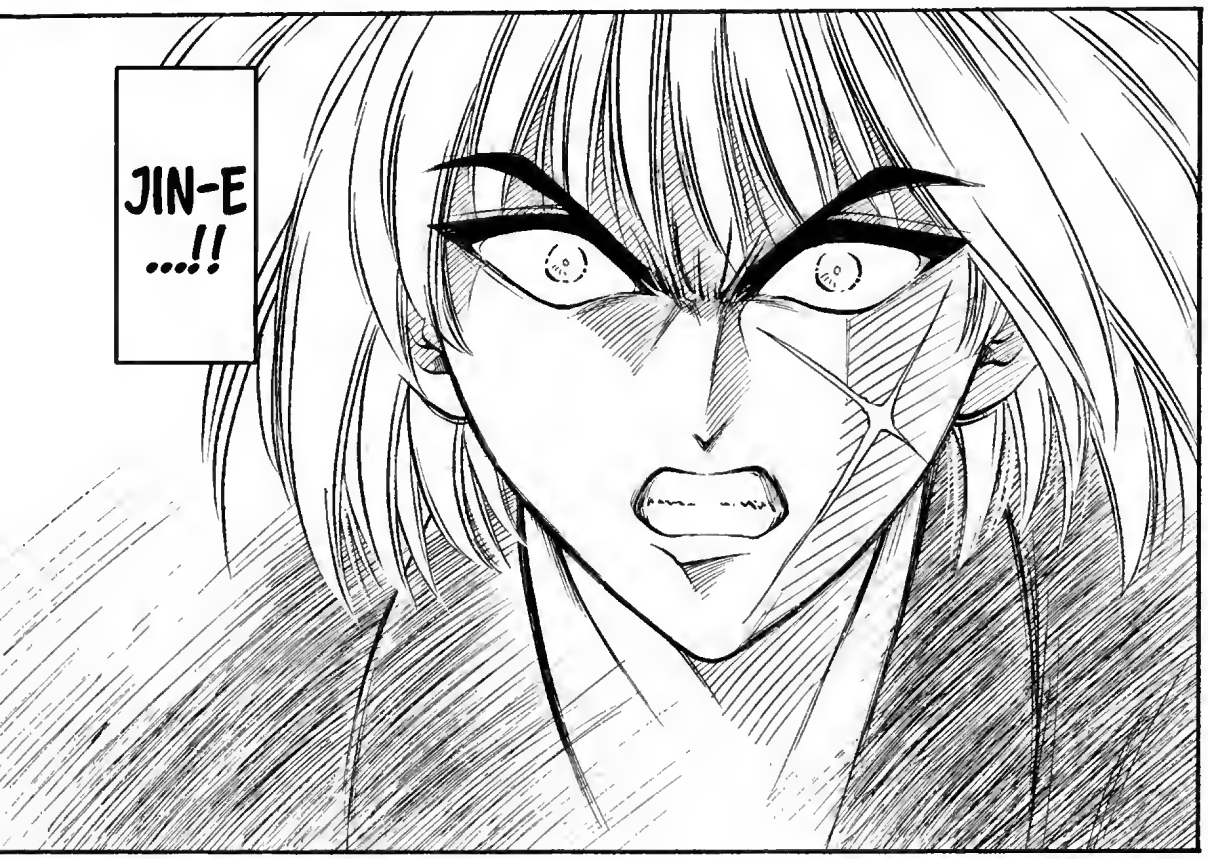
UHU-
HU-
HU.

UHU-
HAH-
HAH-
HAH!!
SIH
SIH
SIH

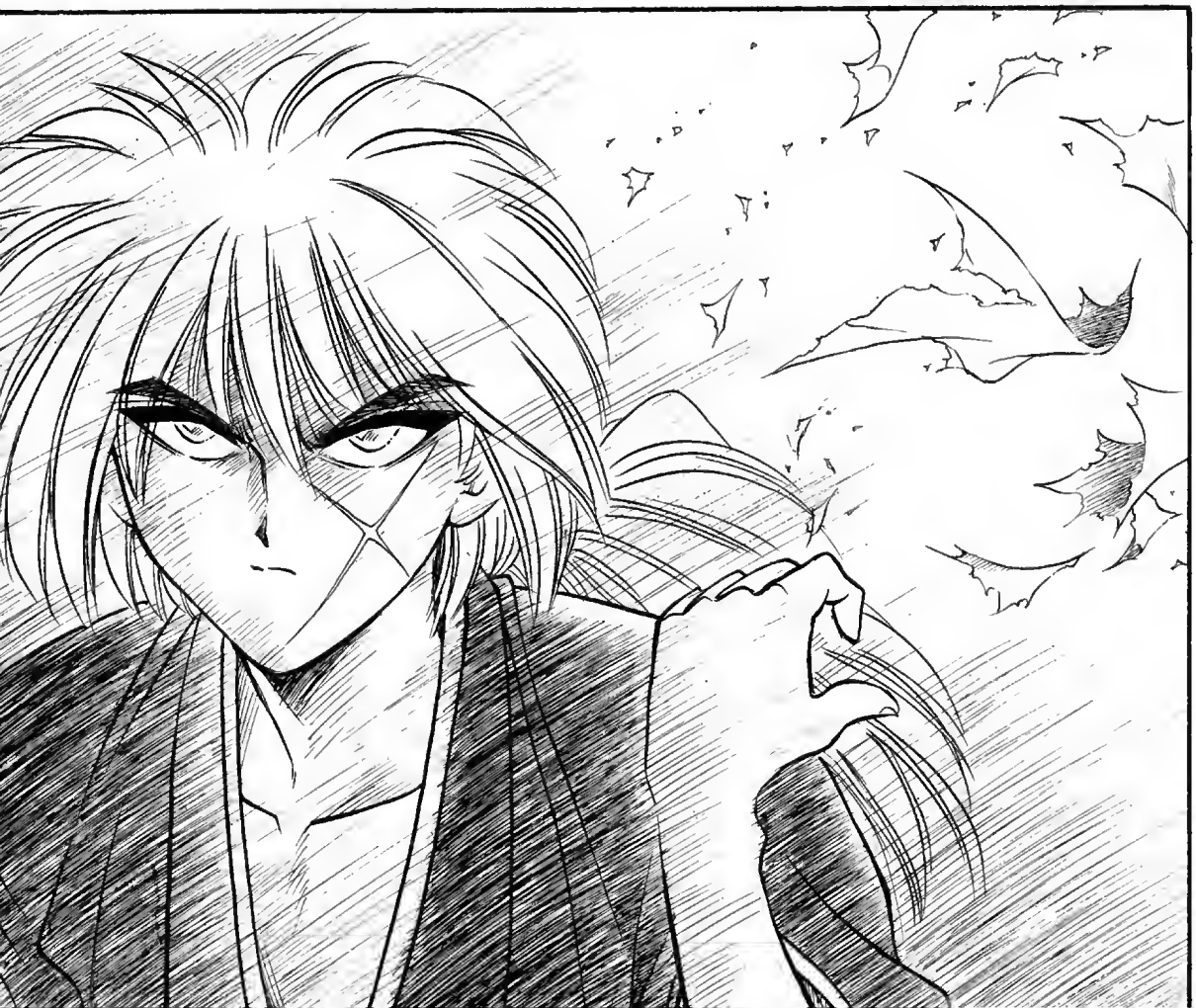
I SEE IT. I SEE IT, BATTŌSAI !!
I SEE THAT THIS GIRL IS YOUR WOMAN!!
INTO THE INCOMPARABLY CRUEL HITOKIRI...
GET MAD LIKE LAST NIGHT WHEN I STABBED THE BIRD-HAIRED PUNK!
TURN BACK INTO YOUR OLD SELF OF TEN YEARS AGO!
GET MAD!! GET MAD!!
JIN-E, YOU MONSTER!!
I'LL WAIT HERE, BATTŌSAI!
PNK
KENSHIN!!

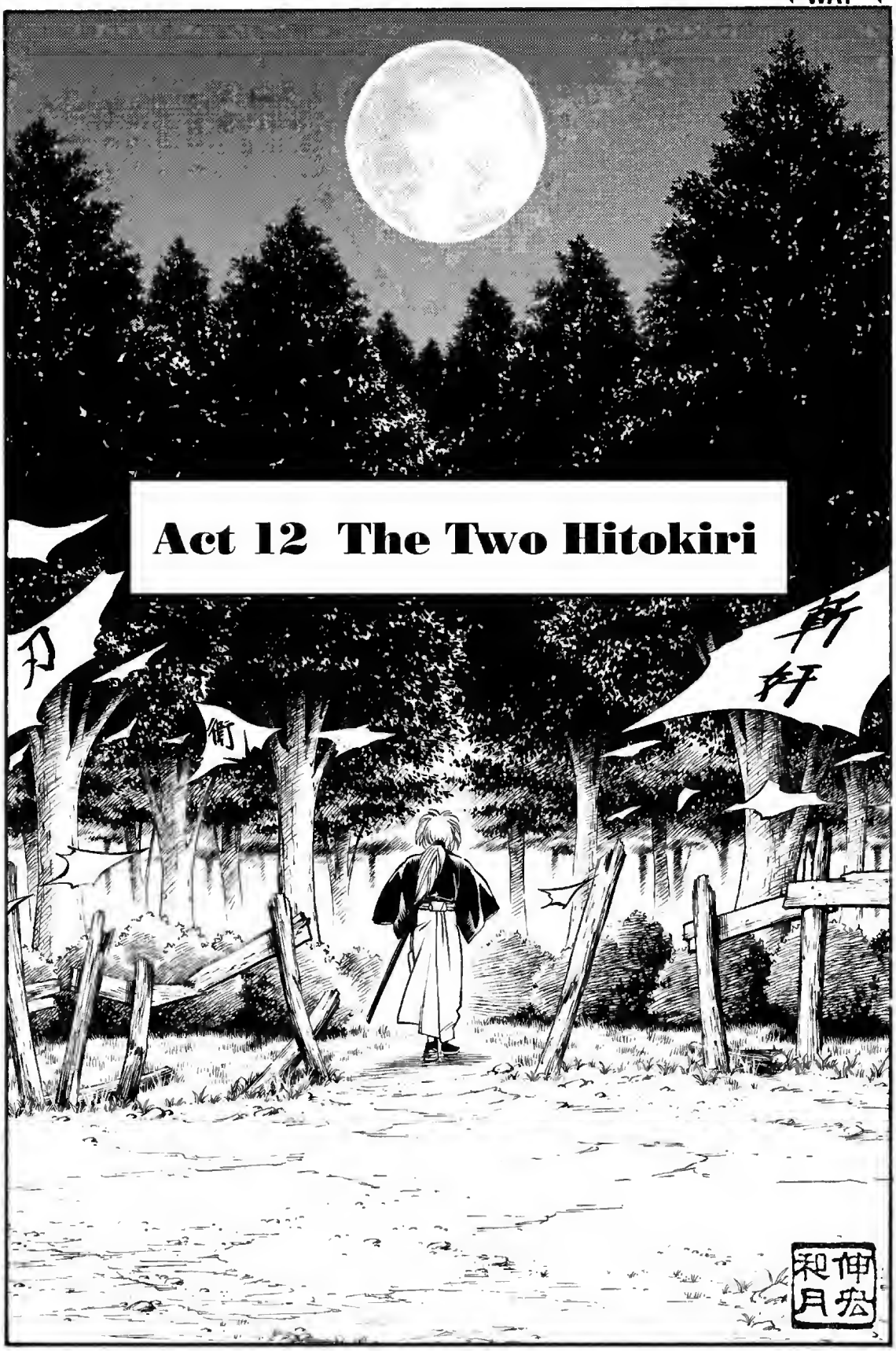
SSSSSHHHHHHH
UHU-HAH-HAH-HAH!!


SSSSSHHH


JIN-E ...!!

Act 12 — The Two Hitokiri



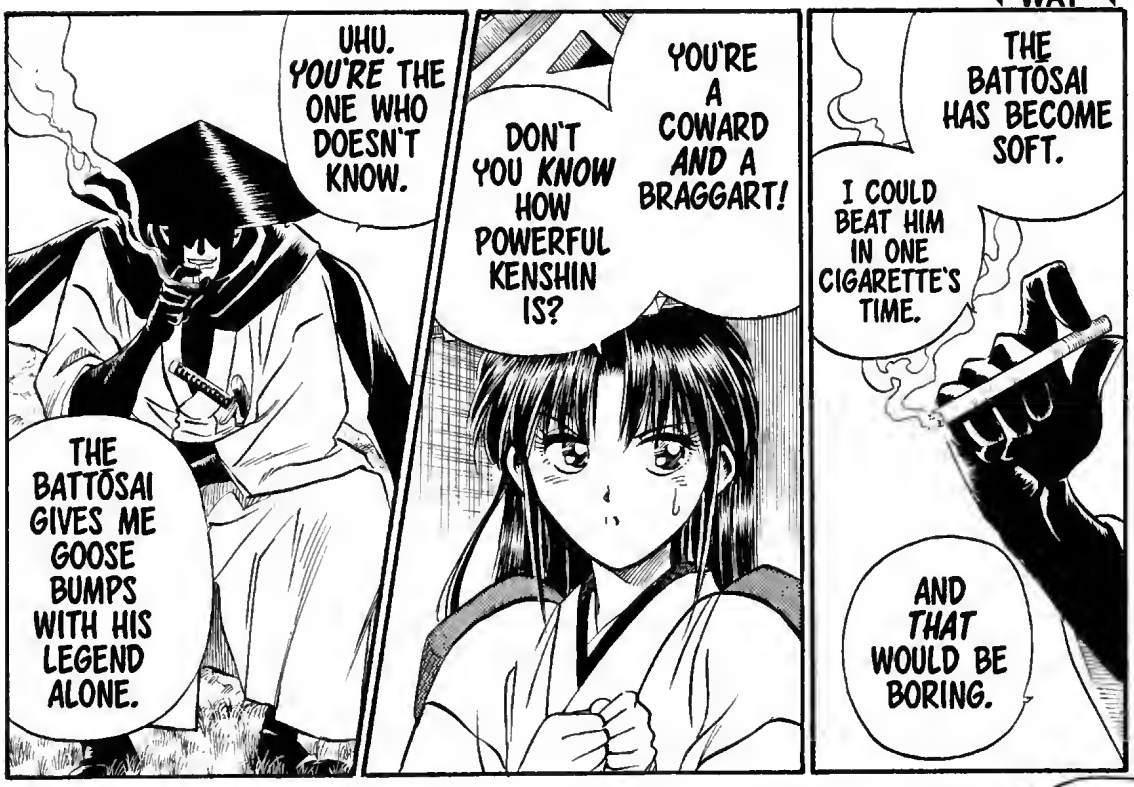

Act 12 The Two Hitokiri
斬奸
刀
衛

UHU-HU-HU. DON'T FROWN SO MUCH.
YOU WEREN'T KIDNAPPED TO BE *EATEN*, YOU KNOW.

UHU.
YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND.

RAGE WILL TURN HIM BACK INTO THE HITOKIRI HE WAS *YEARS* AGO.
WITH YOU AS HOSTAGE, BATTŌSAI WILL BE *ENRAGED*.

KUROGASA TURNS OUT TO BE A BIG *COWARD*.
YOU WANT TO MAKE KENSHIN MORE VULNERABLE.


THE BATTOSAI HAS BECOME SOFT.
I COULD BEAT HIM IN ONE CIGARETTE'S TIME.
AND THAT WOULD BE BORING.
YOU'RE A COWARD AND A BRAGGART!
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW POWERFUL KENSHIN IS?
UHU. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW.
THE BATTOSAI GIVES ME GOOSE BUMPS WITH HIS LEGEND ALONE.

FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE AGAINST THAT MAN...
IT WILL BE THE BEST KILLING.

UHU.
UHU-HU.
UHU-HU.
.....
UHU-HU.
UHU-HU.

THAT'S ALL THE TIME WE HAVE TO CHAT.
UHU. IT'S MIDNIGHT.
WELL, THEN.
SWP

IT'S THE BEGINNING OF A WONDERFUL MOMENT.
PCH

KENSHIN!
EH, BATTŌSAI ?

UHU.
PF
FINE EYES. FULL OF RAGE.
RAGE ...
AT YOU, WHO INVOLVED KAORU-DONO.
AND AT ME, WHO COULDN'T PREVENT IT.
HE SAID "ME"?

PERFECT! YOU'VE STOPPED USING THAT WIMPY "THIS ONE," AND STARTED TALKING LIKE YOU USED TO!
NOW IF YOU'D ONLY TURN OVER THAT ODD BLADE...
KENSHIN ...
WE'D HAVE OUR LEGENDARY HITOKIRI BACK.
SNEER

KENSHIN
...
HYAAA!!
UHU-
HAH-
HAH!!
KO
KI

KKG
KKG
KKG
KKG
KKG
KKG
KKG

HWA

READ THIS WAY
UHU-U-U...
UHU-HU-HU.
HSSS
U-HAH!
USELESS!!
POOHH!!

I'VE TOLD YOU, THAT TECHNIQUE WILL NOT WORK!
UHU.
IS THIS... "HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI"...?
HE'S DIFFERENT... HE'S NOT THE KENSHIN I KNOW.
FIRST--
READ HIS MOVEMENT ...
ONE-HANDED FLAT THRUST!
PM
M

THE FORM OF "ONE"-- SIDE SWING.
FF
NEXT ...

FROM THERE, STRAIGHT TO "TEN"--THE BAMBOO SPLITTER.
NOW--
WOK
DISRUPT!

...HU-HU.
UH...
!!?
GSH
GWARRRR

BBI!
!!
UHU.
555 555
HHHH

YOU READ MY MOVES WELL...
...UNTIL MY "BACK-WARDS WHEEL."
SS SS
G...
YOU STILL AREN'T THE BATTŌSAI AGAIN. NOT NEARLY.
IN THREE CIGARETTES' TIME. I COULD KILL YOU.
KENSHIN!
HOW BORING.
WE MUST HAVE YOU BECOME MORE ENRAGED.
!?

K...
KHH...?
!!...?!
KHH... HH...
ENOUGH TO STOP HER LUNGS.
I MADE IT SRONGER THAN USUAL.
KAORU-DONO!!
SHE WILL LAST TWO MINUTES, AT MOST.
.....
.....
THIS WON'T BE AS EASY TO BREAK AS LAST NIGHT.

YOU'VE NO TIME FOR TALK.
IF YOU'VE SOMETHING TO SAY, SPEAK WITH THAT SWORD!
IN
DEATH BY SUFFOCATION IS SO MESSY.
SNEER
THE CARCASS SPILLS OUT SALIVA, AND WASTE.
GG
.....
JIN-E ...
?

UHH
?!

READ THIS WAY
HO... VERY GOOD...
NNN
NNN
I NEVER SAW THE SWORD... OR EVEN YOUR BODY MOVE!
SO THAT'S HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...
GNG
THIS...
...IS HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI!
NO TIME FOR TALK.
STRIKE THEN, SO I CAN KILL YOU.

Act 13 – The Meaning of the Name

Act 13
The Meaning of the Name

伸宏和月

HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI IS BACK--
--AND THIS MATCH IS WORTH FIGHTING!
FWA

DDDDDDD
HERE I COME, BATTŌSAI!

OHHH
BMG
THE BLOODLUST IS IN YOUR EYES.
UHU ... IN TRUTH, YOU ARE HE...
AFRAID ?!

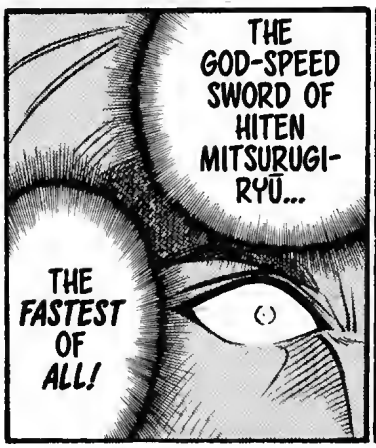
IF YOU DO WANT TO LIVE--
--BREAK THE SPELL YOU PUT ON KAORU-DONO.
I CAN'T.
THIS IS MUCH STRONGER THAN THE ONE I PUT ON THAT PIG, TANI.
SHE MUST EITHER BREAK IT HERSELF, OR MY WILL MUST BE COMPLETELY SHATTERED. THOSE ARE THE ONLY CHOICES.
SNEER
OF COURSE THE FORMER...
IS IMPOSSIBLE.
THEN...
I WILL JUST KILL YOU.
SS
SS
THAT...
...IS ALSO IMPOSSIBLE.
PEOPLE ARE SO VULNERABLE TO SUGGESTION.
IF WE BELIEVE WE ARE SICK, OUR BODIES FAIL.
IF WE BELIEVE WE CAN'T BREATHE, WE SUFFOCATE.

IT MAKES ONE BELIEVE... AND THE BODY RESPONDS!
AND THAT IS THE POWER...
...OF "ONE SIDE OF THE SOUL," SHIN NO IPPŌ!!
...IT IS SO!!
HSS
EVEN FOR THE MASTER OF THE TECHNIQUE...
!?
DMM
SS SS
SS
HYOHH!

READ THIS WAY
--I--
--AM--
SSS
SSS
--POWER!
...YOU BECOME WHAT YOU BELIEVE.
BY USING THE TECHNIQUE ON YOURSELF...
SO.
--I--
--AM--
TNG
TNG
--STEEL!
D
W
I...
...CANNOT LOSE.

SNIN-NO-IPPŌ SHADOW SKILL.
"GRASP OF THE DEMON".
I HAVEN'T USED THIS...
...SINCE I ESCAPED THE SHINSENGUMI 15 YEARS AGO.
HYOO
ア-
ァト

KRMBL
...YET, I WILL USE IT.
YOU COULD CALL IT UNFAIR...
!
KNG
BUT...
USE WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
KSS

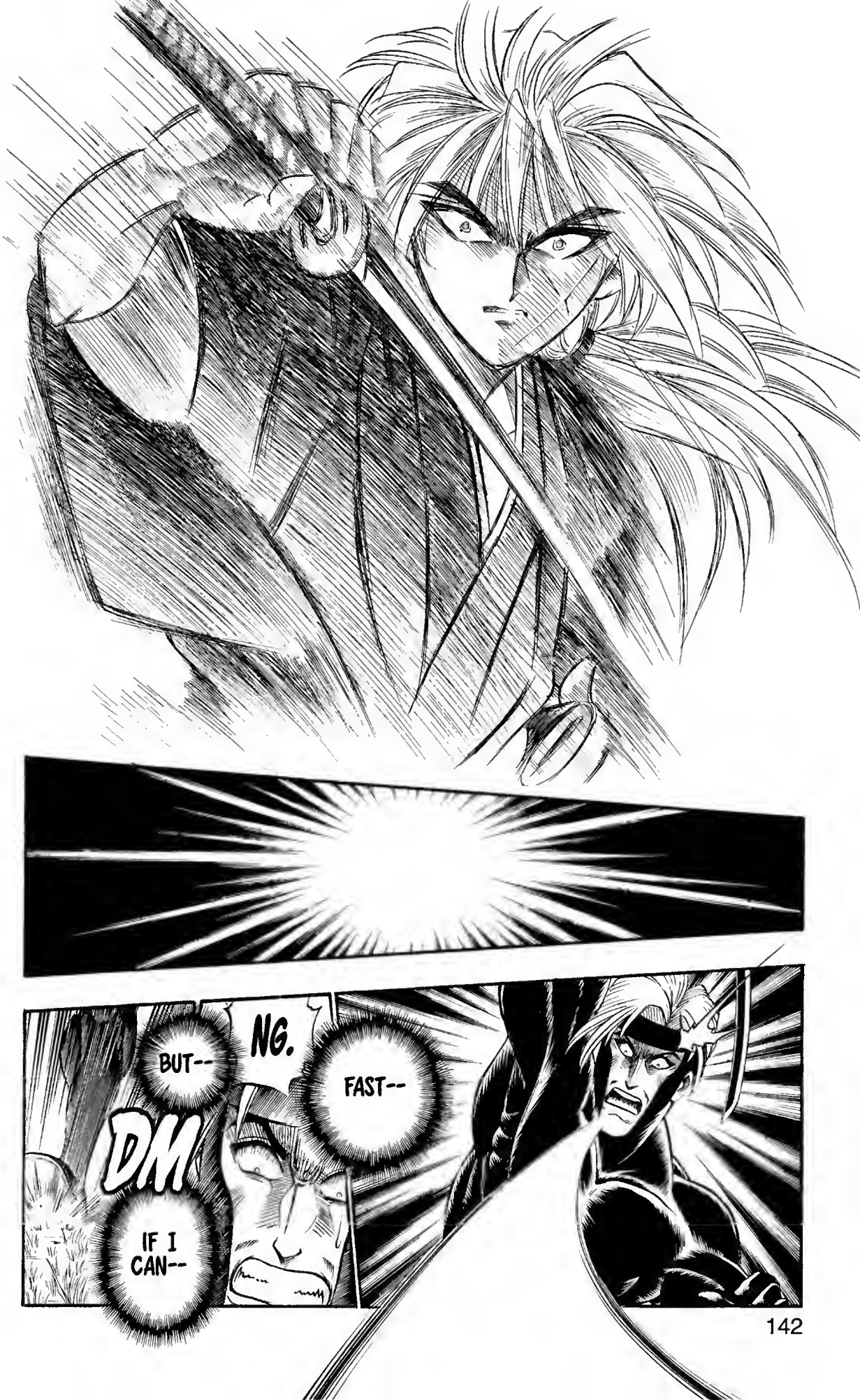


Battōjutsu

Press the blade's edge against the inside of the sheath, then draw the sword quickly to increase the speed of the sword's swing by two to three times' normal. In this way, the attacker may strike the opponent before there is time to react. In other schools, this same technique is known as "*iai*" or "*nuki*."

READ THIS WAY
BUT...IF I CAN DODGE THIS, I WIN!
LEARN THE MEANING OF THE NAME, BATTŌSAI.
COME.
BATTŌJUTSU IS A ONE-STRIKE MOVE... ONE THAT WILL LEAVE HIM COMPLETELY UNGUARDED ONCE IT IS RELEASED! A DOUBLE-EDGED CHOICE, CERTAIN DEATH TO THE USER WHEN IT FAILS.
I CAN!
I CAN DODGE IT!!
CAN I... DODGE IT...?

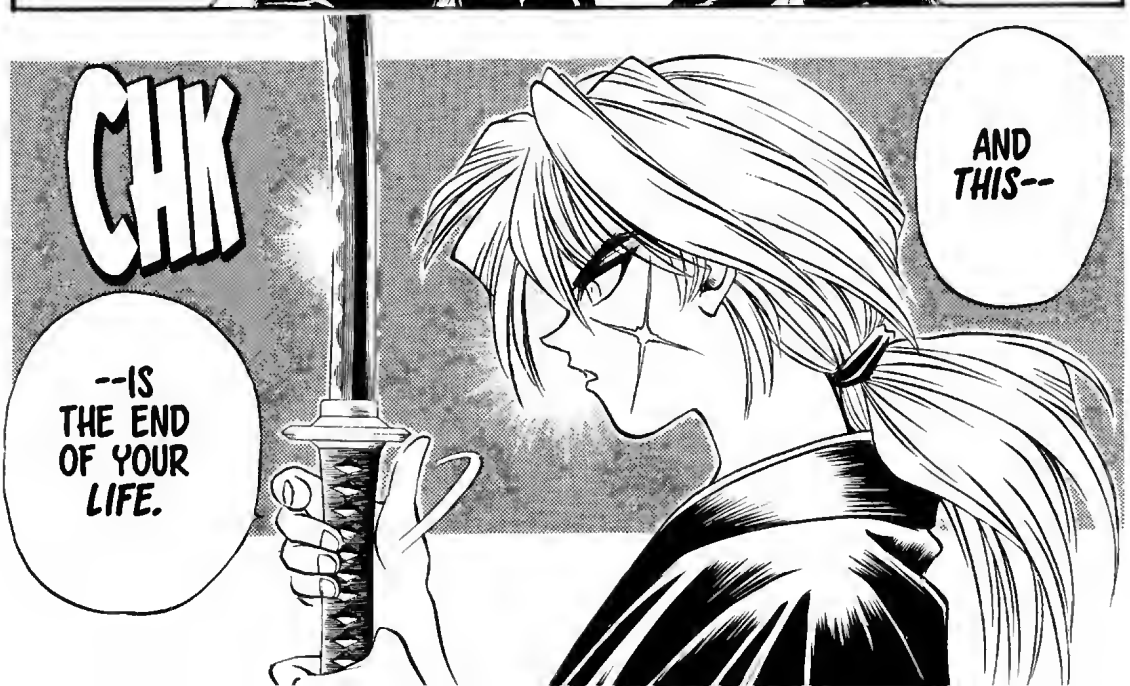
--BATTŌSAI!!
TMW
MM
STRIKE NOW--
A SAKABATŌ IS UNSUITED FOR BATTŌJUTSU!
THE BLUNT EDGE UP AGAINST THE CURVE OF THE SHEATH! THE SPEED OF THE DRAW, SLOWED BY ITS DULLNESS!
WHICH IS--
--YOUR SWORD !!
THAT SMALL DIFFERENCE... IS MY WINDOW TO VICTORY!
HYAAHH!
YOU FORGET ONE CRITICAL FACT!
YOU MISS ONE DEADLY FLAW!


NG.
BUT--
FAST--
DM
IF I CAN--

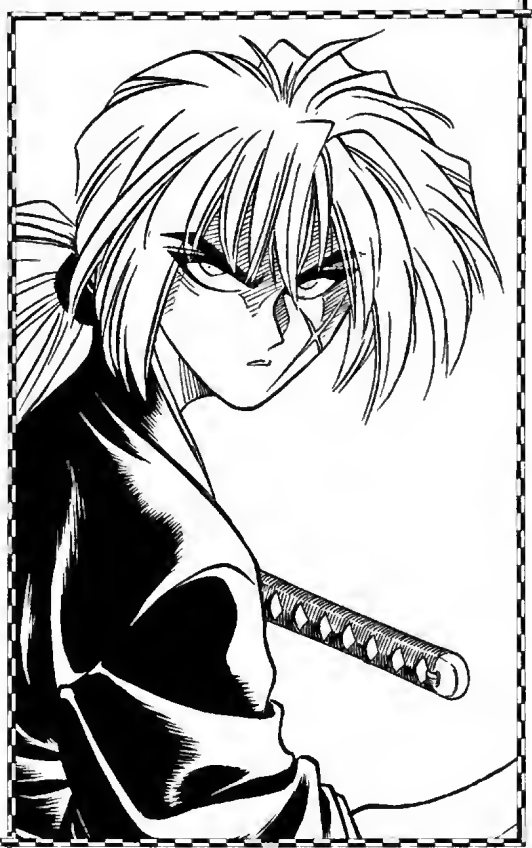
VICTORY IS MINE, BATTŌSAI !!
YES!!
!!
PK
HSSSSS

KAHAAAA
SHRK
SHIIIII
...AND THE SHEATH ?!
WHA...
HE...
...USED THE SWORD ...

*SŌRYŪSEN: "DOUBLE DRAGON STRIKE"



DIE.
!!
UHU.
SS



READ THIS WAY

Act 14 End Beneath the Moon

KENSHIN ...!

READ THIS WAY
WHAT'S WRONG, BATTŌSAI?
WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
THERE'S NO REASON TO HESITATE.
YOU'VE NO TIME FOR IT.
YOUR SAKABATŌ.
TAP
PUT IT HERE... A SOUVENIR FOR THE *AFTERLIFE.*
YOU MUST *KILL* ME TO BREAK THE SPELL.
IF YOU DON'T, THE LITTLE GIRL WILL DIE. IF YOU *DO*, SHE LIVES.
IT'S THE *EASIEST* OF CHOICES.

READ THIS WAY
...GOOD POINT. I'VE NO WISH TO GIVE GIFTS..
BUT...
...TO SAVE KAORU-DONO...
I WILL ONCE AGAIN BECOME THE HITOKIRI.
DIE.
THAT'S RIGHT! LET JIN-E TASTE YOUR CRAZED BLADE!

READ THIS WAY

...SWORDSMANSHIP IS A WAY TO KILL.
A SWORD IS A WEAPON. WHATEVER PRETTY NAMES YOU GIVE IT--
THE SWEET, NAÏVE LIE SHE TELLS IS SO MUCH BETTER.
BUT IN THE FACE OF SUCH AWFUL TRUTH...
KEN...
...SHIN.
IF THIS ONE HAD A WISH...

KENSHIN!!
ZOOOOOOOOOO!!!

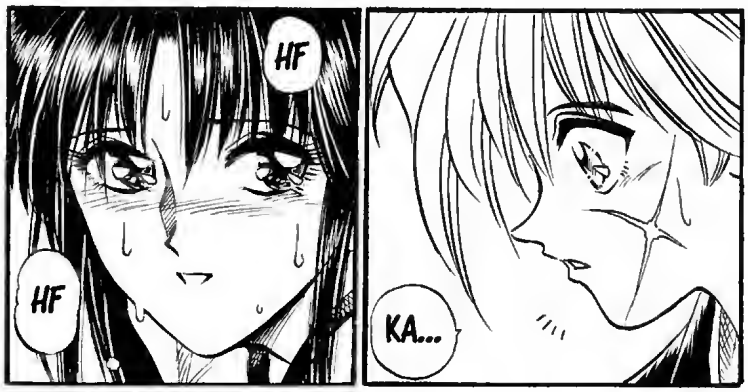
DON'T... GO BACK THERE...
DON'T... BECOME A HITOKIRI...
HAA
HAA
HAA
OHHH
D...
HAA
...N...
KAORU-DONO!!
DNM
UHU.

Okay! So! The "CD book" version of "Rurouni Kenshin"...! The recording script looks great and I'm really excited. I just wish I weren't so busy with work so I could sit in on the recording...But... is this real? Is "Rurouni Kenshin" REALLY real?

I think I may be dreaming....We'll find out, I guess. Hoping you're enjoying this as much as I am (I'm a little scared, myself...).

Watsuki

和月伸宏



I'M ALL RIGHT...
KENSHIN.
HEH...

UH...
...THE KENSHIN I KNOW!
HF
HF
AH. NOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE...
ORO?

!!
I'M FINE, SO--
REALLY! I'M FINE!

I MUST BE GETTING SOFT *MYSELF.*
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT THIS LITTLE GIRL COULD BREAK MY SPELL.
YOU AND THAT BIRD-HAIRED PUNK FROM LAST NIGHT, I CAN UNDER-STAND.

GIVE IN PEACEFULLY.
YOU'VE LOST. IT'S ALL OVER.

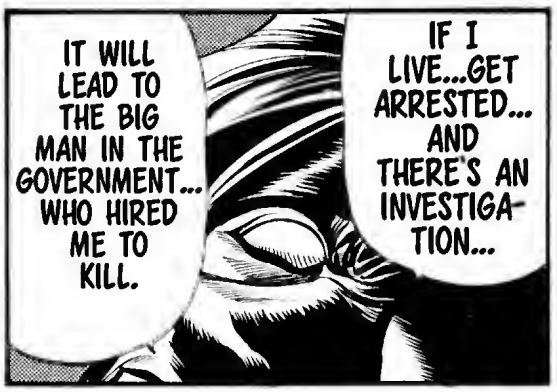
TK
NO, IT'S NOT OVER YET.
SSSS

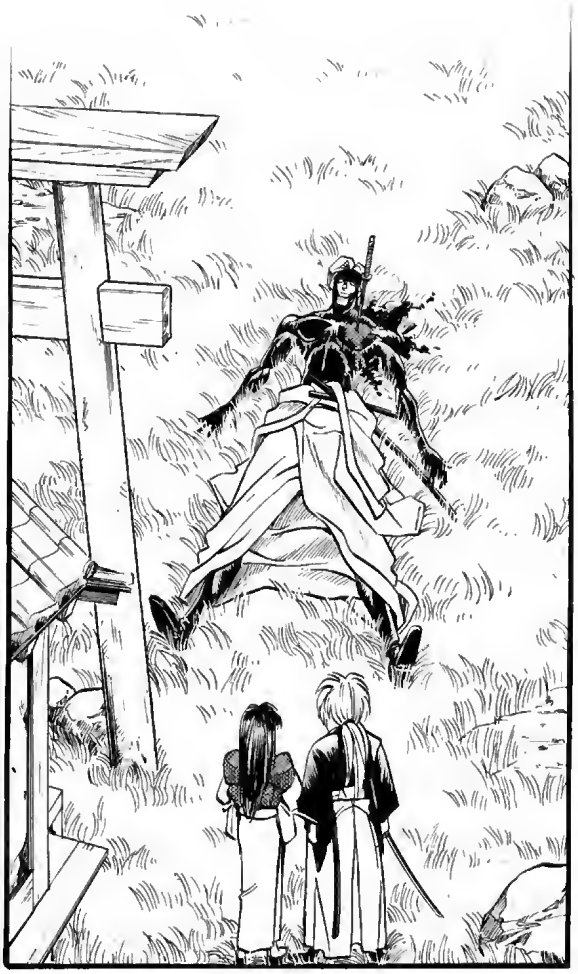
STOP IT, JIN-E.
WITH THE *WAKIZASHI* AND YOUR LEFT-ARM ONLY, YOU'VE NO CHANCE OF WINNING.

I HAVE CLEAN-UP TO DO.
THIS FEELING... SO SWEET.
MMM...

.....

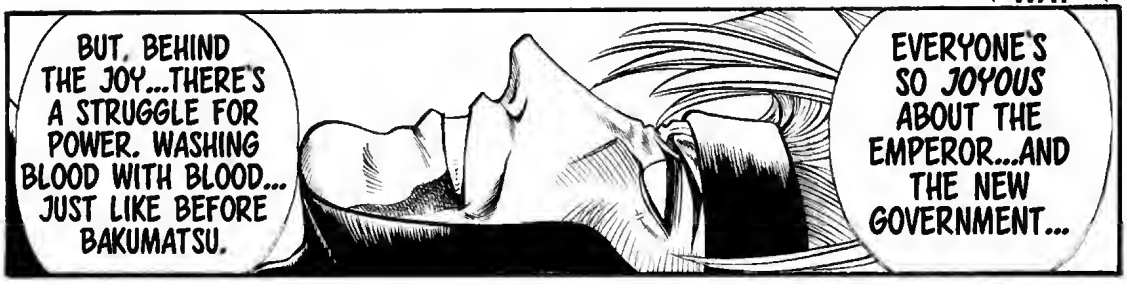
BUT I TOLD YOU...IT'S *CLEAN-UP*...
YOUR FACE SAYS, "I DON'T UNDER-STAND."


IT WILL LEAD TO THE BIG MAN IN THE GOVERNMENT... WHO HIRED ME TO KILL.
IF I LIVE...GET ARRESTED... AND THERE'S AN INVESTIGA-TION...



WH... WHAT ...?

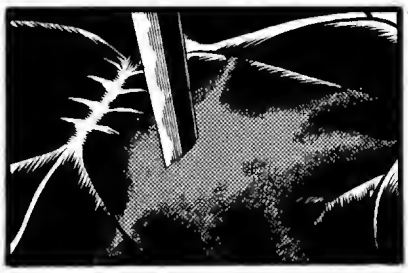
UHU-HU... YOU DIDN'T *REALLY* THINK THE "NEW MEIJI AGE" MADE HITOKIRI UN-NECESSARY?
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU, BATTOSAI. *THAT* IS WHY I SAY YOU'VE GONE SOFT.


BUT, BEHIND THE JOY...THERE'S A STRUGGLE FOR POWER. WASHING BLOOD WITH BLOOD... JUST LIKE BEFORE BAKUMATSU.
EVERYONE'S SO *JOYOUS* ABOUT THE EMPEROR...AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT...

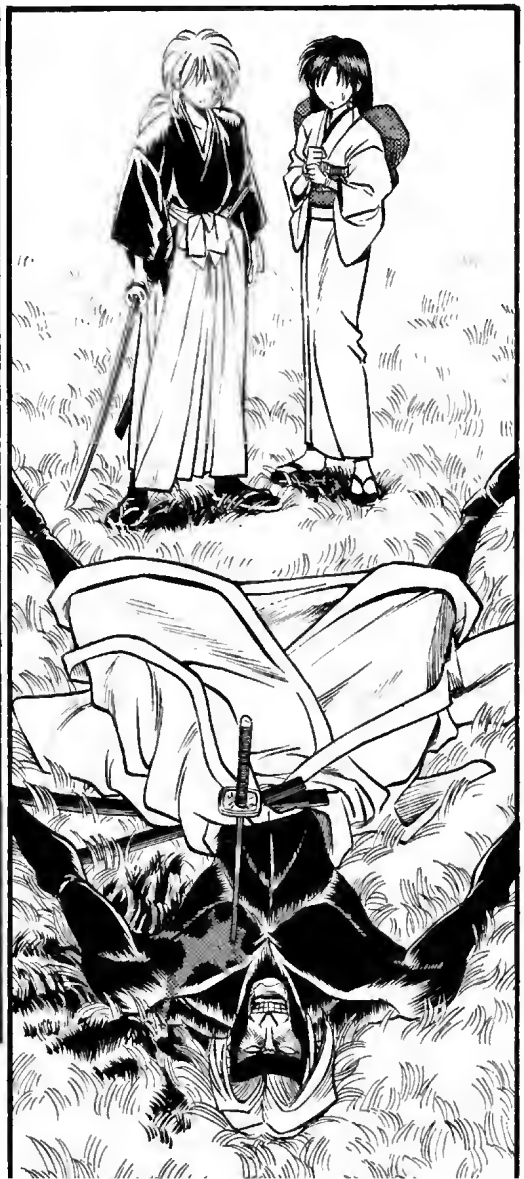
THUS, THE CRAZED MURDERER, "KUROGASA."
AND I DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE MY PATH. I *COULD* NOT LEAVE MY PATH. THE BIG MAN'S INTERESTS... AND MINE... *INTERSECTED.*
OBSTACLES STILL NEED TO BE REMOVED. BUT THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN MODERNIZED... THE POLICE GIVEN MORE POWER...MAKING GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED ASSASINATIONS... *DIFFICULT.*

JIN-E ...
BUT I DON'T MIND. THE DEATH-MATCH WITH YOU WAS QUITE FUN. AND WITH MY RIGHT ARM CRUSHED...
WHEN I CHALLENGED YOU, I *BROKE* THAT RULE. AND NOW LOOK AT ME.
...LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN SO *BORING.*
"THE HITOKIRI KILLS OF HIS OWN WILL."
"YET, HE DOES NOT CHOOSE THE TARGET." YES?

READ THIS WAY
ANOTHER HITOKIRI TELLS YOU THIS. IT CANNOT BE WRONG.
THE HITOKIRI IS YOUR TRUE NATURE.
A HITOKIRI IS A HITOKIRI UNTIL DEATH.
YOU CANNOT BE ANYTHING ELSE.
KEEP PLAYING AT "RUROUNI." I'LL WATCH YOU...FROM HELL.
UHU... UHU-HU...
DON'T YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, BATTŌSAI.
YOUR EYES WERE MUCH BETTER BEFORE...
SHEER
...WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO KILL ME.

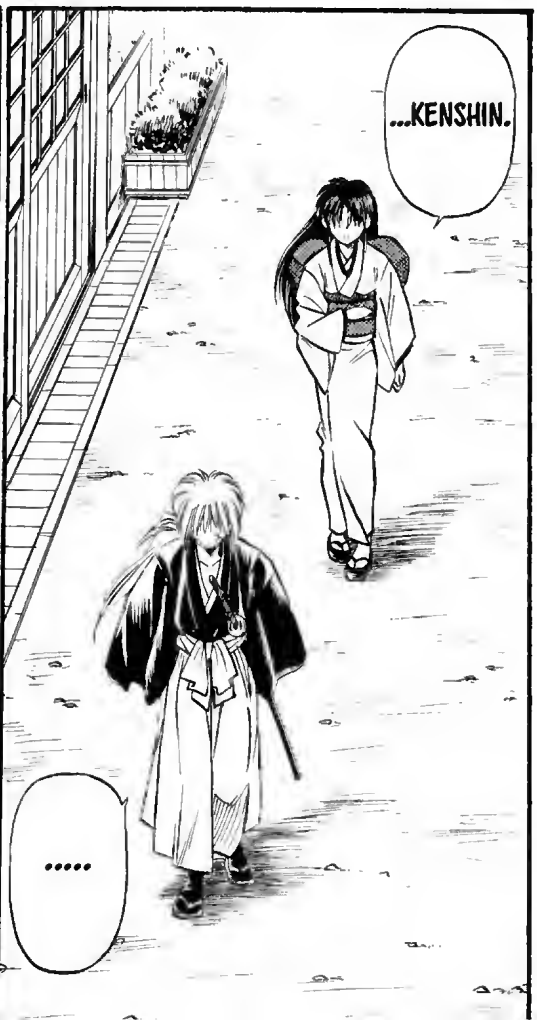


A HITOKIRI IS A HITOKIRI UNTIL DEATH...



LET'S GO HOME, KAORU-DONO.
IT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEM FROM HERE. LET THE POLICE HANDLE IT.

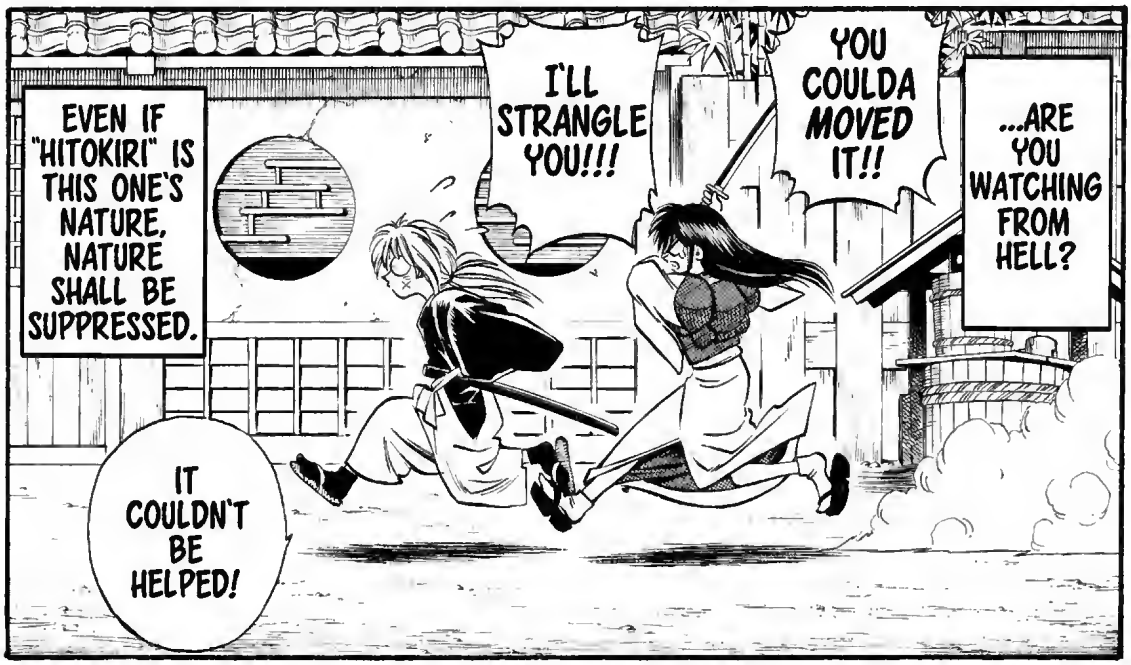
WHAT IS IT?
MM ...?
KENSHIN.

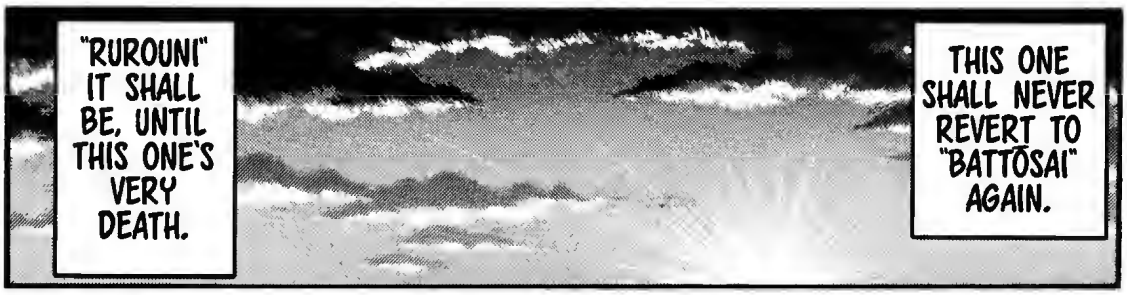

...KENSHIN.
.....

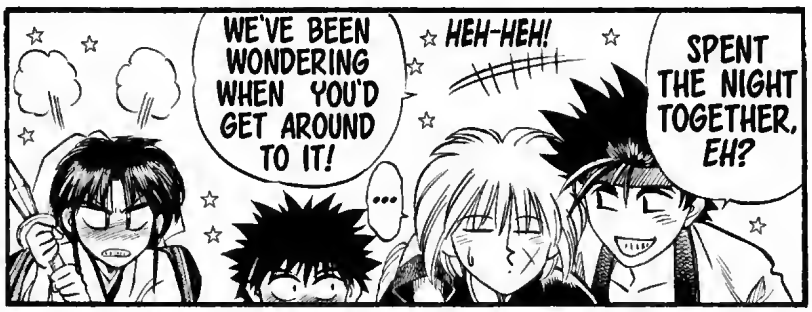
THANKS FOR SAVING ME.
LET ME SAY THAT, AT LEAST.

READ THIS WAY
THANKS SHOULD GO TO YOU.
...IN FACT...
REALLY, THIS ONE IS SO GRATEFUL!
HEH...
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THANKS.
THIS ONE WOULD STILL BE BATTŌSAI... THE ASSASSIN.
UM... SURE.
OH...
HUH?
IF KAORU-DONO HADN'T SAID "NO"...
OH. ♡
SHF
IT MUST BE RETURNED!
OH. RIGHT. YOUR RIBBON.
ORO.
BLOKB
.....

JIN-E ...
W-WELL, HE DID SORT OF SLICE MY SHOULDER OPEN...
BLOOD! ON MY FAVORITE RIBBON!!


EVEN IF "HITOKIRI" IS THIS ONE'S NATURE, NATURE SHALL BE SUPPRESSED.
I'LL STRANGLE YOU!!!
YOU COULDA MOVED IT!!
...ARE YOU WATCHING FROM HELL?
IT COULDN'T BE HELPED!


"RUROUNI" IT SHALL BE, UNTIL THIS ONE'S VERY DEATH.
THIS ONE SHALL NEVER REVERT TO "BATTŌSAI" AGAIN.


WE'VE BEEN WONDERING WHEN YOU'D GET AROUND TO IT!
HEH-HEH!
...
SPENT THE NIGHT TOGETHER, EH?

The Secret Life of Characters (7)

— Udō Jin-e —

The motif for this character is the No. 1 hitokiri of the Bakumatsu, *Okada Izō*...or so it was s*upposed* to have been, but Udō Jin-e looks even less like his real-life, historical counterpart than Kenshin does. So, Izō fans, no letters with razor-blades in them, please? (I wish I were kidding.)

That aside, I designed the character to be a polar opposite of Kenshin, and what I came up with is Jin-e. *Satsujin-ki* or "murderous ogre" that he is, Jin-e is the sort of complicated fellow who's not only crazy-acting, but *crazy*-crazy. It was tough, but both the character and the story proved worth the trouble. Jin-e being the No. 1 fan favorite for bad guys and all, it was also tough deciding how to end it, but ultimately I reasoned that, his "art of *hitokiri*" not otherwise being complete, he would have to commit a tearful suicide. Technically he may not have defeated Battōsai, but in another sense, Jin-e was the only one ever to defeat Kenshin. *That* is Udō Jin-e.

His outfit comes from a Shinsengumi manga that came out 14, 15 years ago—from its cool main character, *Serizawa Kamo* (we're talking Hijikata-cool here, kids). If you by chance happen to already have *known* this, then you have passed beyond the realm of mere Shinsengumi otakudom. You, my friend, are a Shinsengumi *master*.

"Uhu-hu-hu" laugh comes from the character "Ukon" in "*Kenka-ya Ukon* (Fight Merchant Ukon)," as played by *Sugi Ryōtarō*.

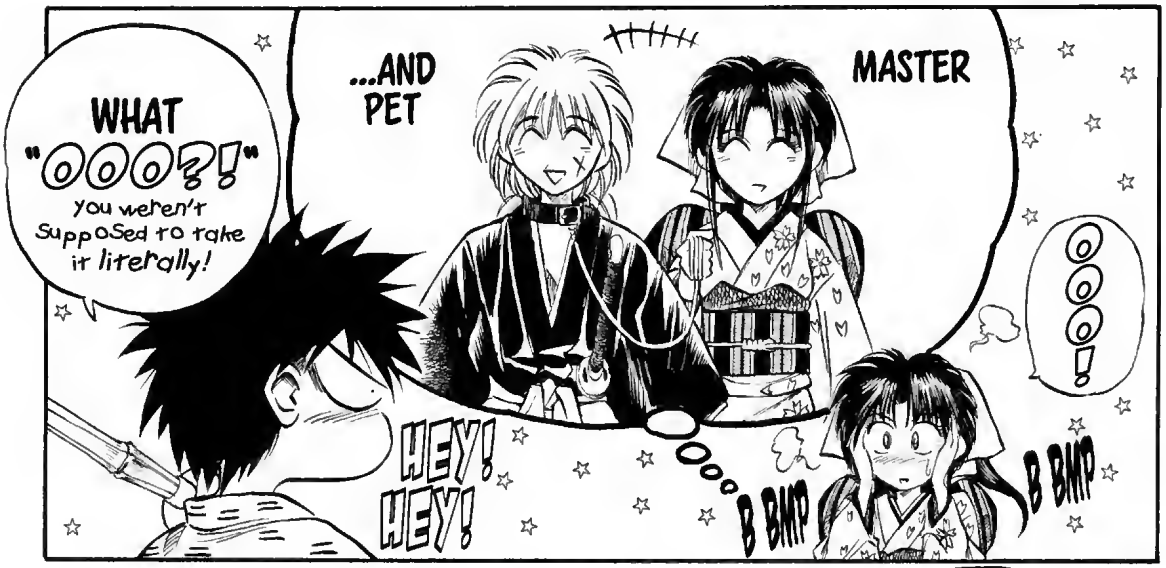
READ THIS WAY

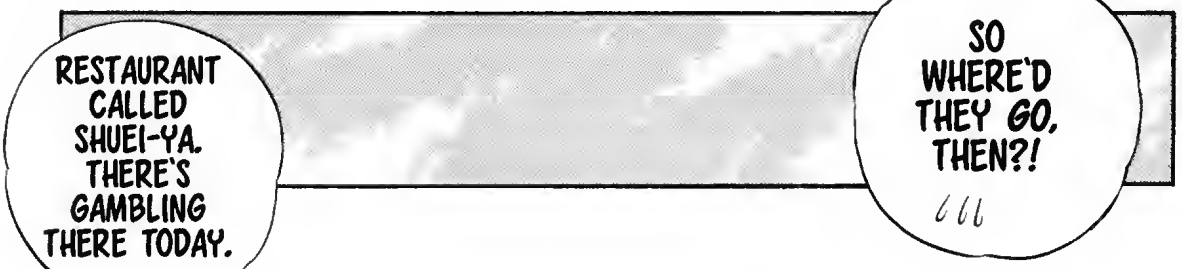
Act 15
Beauty on the Run

KENSHIN!
KAMIYA KASSHIN-RYŪ DOJO
KENSHIN--?
TOILET
THE WELL
WHERE ARE YOU?
HEY!
KENSHIN'S ROOM
UNLESS...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HE'S NOWHERE.
...WEIRD.

!
SANOSUKE JUST CAME AND TOOK KENSHIN OUT.
REALLY ?
Where's the trust?
WHY SHOULD I LIE?
TK TK TK
TK TK TK

WHY DON'T YOU JUST PUT A LEASH ON HIM?
YOU'RE REALLY A WORRY-WORM, YOU KNOW THAT?
WHAT A RELIEF.
I JUST... THOUGHT HE MIGHT REALLY HAVE GONE WANDERING THIS TIME...

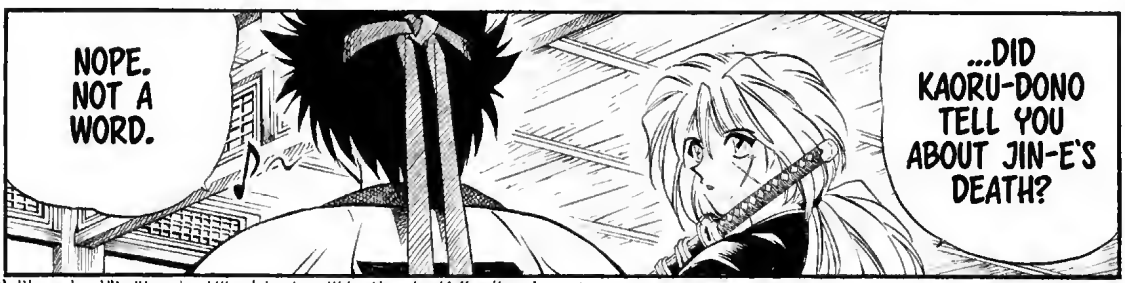

WHAT "OOO?!"
you weren't supposed to take it literally!
...AND PET
MASTER
HEY! HEY!
Ooo
B BMP
B BMP
OOO!


RESTAURANT CALLED SHUEI-YA. THERE'S GAMBLING THERE TODAY.
SO WHERE'D THEY GO, THEN?!

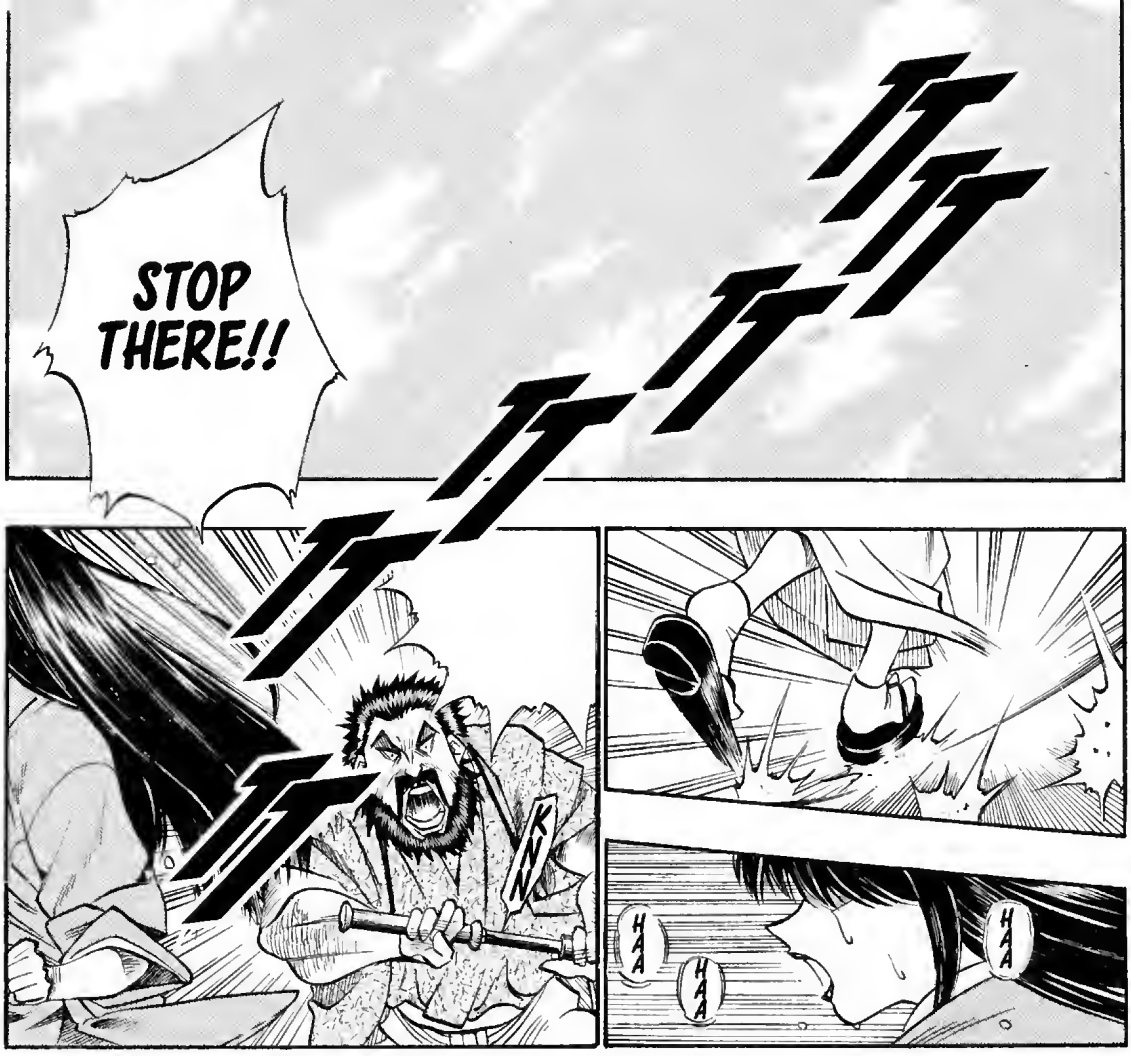
BAM!
GAMBLING?!
G-
PLEASE BET, ODDS OR EVENS!
THE DICE ARE THROWN!
...A 5 AND 6... ODDS.
BLA
BLA
EVENS.
SO WHICH IS IT?
BLA
TAP TAP
BLA
ODDS.
BLA
ODDS.

OOO, THIS TRAINING, I LIKE!
GG
JUST WATCHING THE HANDS, THO', RIGHT?
CALL!
5-6! ODD!
"COME ON," YOU SAID. "IT'S AN EMERGENCY," YOU SAID.
SANO, GAMBLING IS ILLEGAL.
SIGH
TRUE ENOUGH...
AND...?! YOUR SAKABATŌ IS ILLEGAL, TOO. VIOLATION OF THE SWORD BAN.
YOU'RE TOO SERIOUS ABOUT EVERYTHING.
YOU'VE GOTTA LIGHTEN UP OR LIFE'LL NEVER BE ANY FUN.
DON'T WORRY SO MUCH. EVERYONE HERE'S A FRIEND OF MINE.
HOW 'BOUT TONITE?
NOBODY'S GETTING CHEATED, IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF GUYS HAVING FUN.
BUT...

WE'RE ALREADY HERE, SO WE MAY AS WELL ENJOY IT.
HEH
YOUR BAD MOOD ENDS TODAY.
.....


NOPE. NOT A WORD.
...DID KAORU-DONO TELL YOU ABOUT JIN-E'S DEATH?

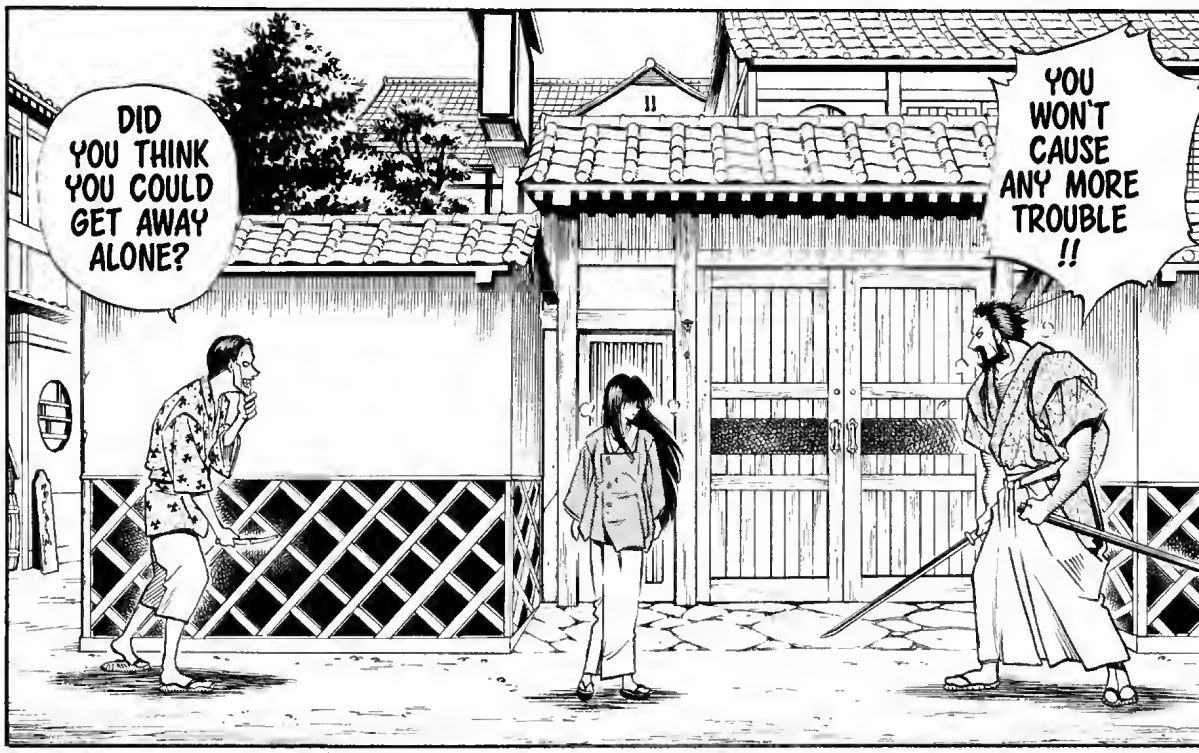
ALL RIGHT! EVENS ON SNAKE EYES!!
...SNAKE EYES.
EVENS.
AND WHO CARES?! NEXT, NEXT! IS THIS ONE ODDS? EVENS?
UGH
GRON



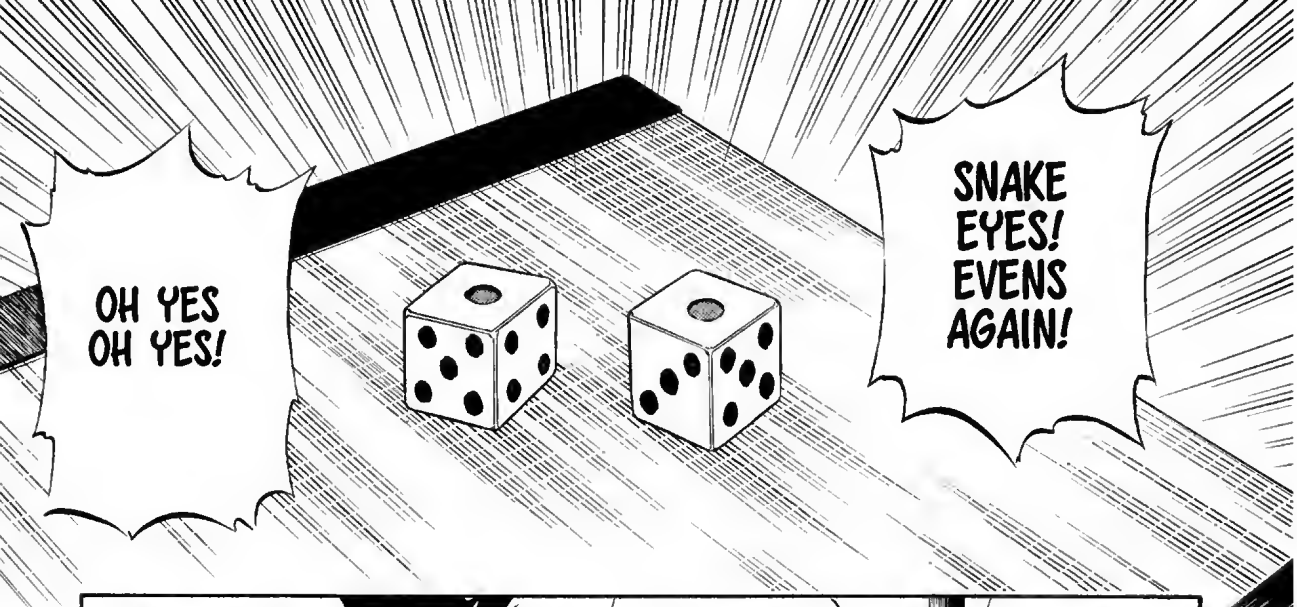
Finally, a note about something OTHER than the CD book. First, thank you for the fan letters which keep coming in. Recently, even though the male-female readership ratio has changed a bit, it's still running around 2:8, with females in the lead. I'm always wanting to pen replies to your letters, but the amount you guys keep SENDING isn't even funny. Worse, work's been piling up and there's no "days off" in sight...not for another couple weeks, anyway. Forgive me!! Sometimes you write, saying you've made dōjinshi "fanzines" and ask if it's okay to send them. Bring 'em on! I've got like 20 of them here already. As it happens, I'm "pro-dōjinshi" myself, so send them on in without fear. For now, then, see you in Volume 3!

Watsuki

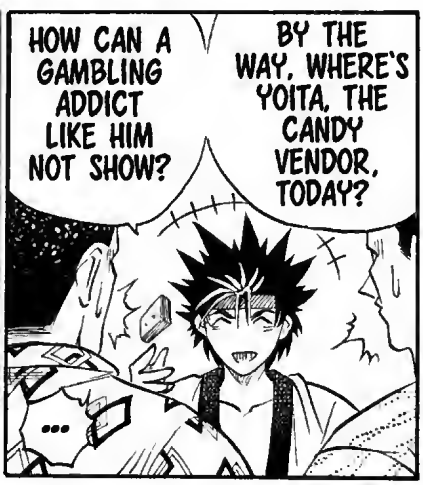
!!
SORRY, BUT THIS IS THE END!!
VSHH

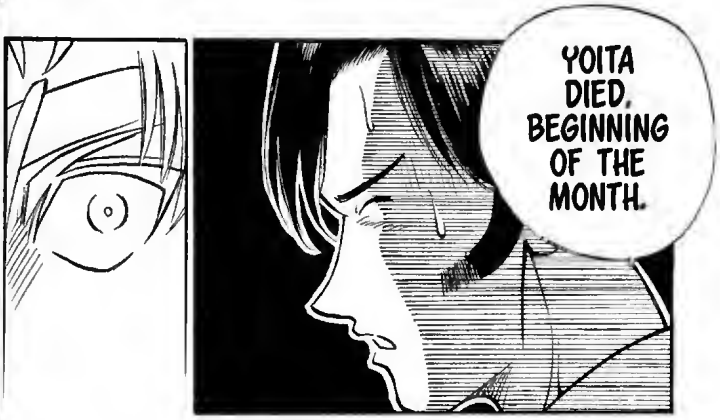

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD GET AWAY ALONE?
YOU WON'T CAUSE ANY MORE TROUBLE !!

DON'T LET HER GET AWAY!
料亭
集英屋
MEGUMI! STOP!!
RESTAURANT SHUEI-YA
STILL TRYING TO RUN?!
GET HER!
KATTA
VH



It seems to be the only one having fun.





Opium

The oldest of narcotics. Collected by dehydrating milky liquid from the ovaries of a poppy plant.

Of the "morphine" family, the withdrawal symptoms produced by opium are exceptionally harsh. Due to its potential to destroy entire societies, its outlaw has been strict and total.

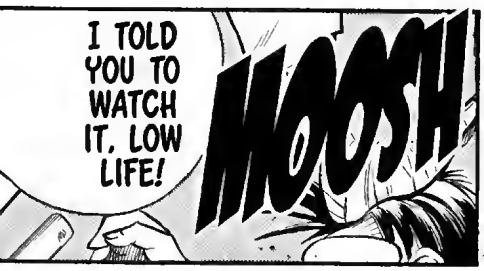
!?
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
AND YOU ARE...?!
ORO?

I'M BEING CHASED BY CRIMINALS! PLEASE HELP ME!
UH... WELL...
BUT WHAT CAN THIS ONE DO?
GOOOO SH!
PLEASE HELP ME!!
ORO ?

THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE FOR YOU TO RUN!!
MEGUMI, YOU WITCH!!

HAND OVER THAT GIRL NOW!!
SHUT UP AND BACK OFF!
OR ELSE...
ASSS
ONE AFTER ANOTHER...
WHO ARE YOU PUNKS ?!

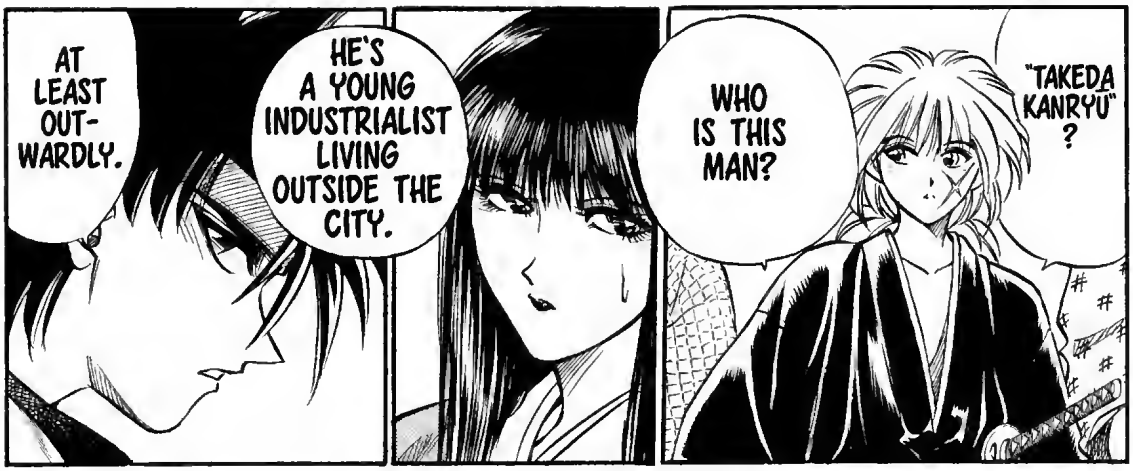
THUD
WUK!!
EEP.
PING
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD RIGHT NOW.
BETTER WATCH YOUR MOUTH.


I TOLD YOU TO WATCH IT, LOW LIFE!
WHOOSH

THIS IS BAD.
KANRYŪ ...
IF IT IS TAKEDA KANRYŪ ...
PSS
PSS
PSS
PSS

WE'RE WITH THE PRIVATE ARMY OF KANRYŪ!
OPPOSING US IS THE SAME AS MAKING KANRYŪ-SAN YOUR ENEMY!

D-D-DO YOU THINK YOU'LL GET AWAY WITH THIS?!
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR


"TAKEDA KANRYU"?
WHO IS THIS MAN?
HE'S A YOUNG INDUSTRIALIST LIVING OUTSIDE THE CITY.
AT LEAST OUTWARDLY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS HE DOES IN THE DARK, BUT IN THE PAST FEW YEARS HE'S GAINED A LOT OF POWER. NOW HE'S EVEN CREATED HIS OWN PRIVATE ARMY. A VERY SHADY GUY.
THE PEOPLE IN THE CITY, FROM THE YAKUZA TO POLITICIANS, ALL AVOID CONFRONTATIONS WITH HIM.

IF THESE GUYS ARE HIS THUGS--THEN ARE YOU ONE OF KANRYU'S PROSTITUTES?
I AM NOT!
THEY'VE NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS "KANRYŪ" PERSON!
YOU SHOULDN'T TELL LIES, TAKANI MEGUMI.
!

WHA... SINCE WHEN HAS HE BEEN...??
HOO HOO HOO
.....
YOU ESCAPED THINKING TWO GUARDS ONLY...
...BUT BY THOSE BENEATH "THE HEAD," YOU ARE ALWAYS UNDER WATCH.
BE IT THE BED-ROOM ... ...THE BATH ...
HOO HOO HOO
...EVEN THE TOILET.
SH!
...HMPH.
TCH
I TELL YOU I'M NO PROSTITUTE.

GO BACK AND TELL KANRYU!
I WILL KEEP RUNNING FROM HIM!
HOO-HOO-HOO. HOW CUTE.
ESPECIALLY IN THINKING YOU CAN RUN...

VOOO
VOOO
UGH!
GYAH!
VEEP
VEEP
DSSH
DSSH

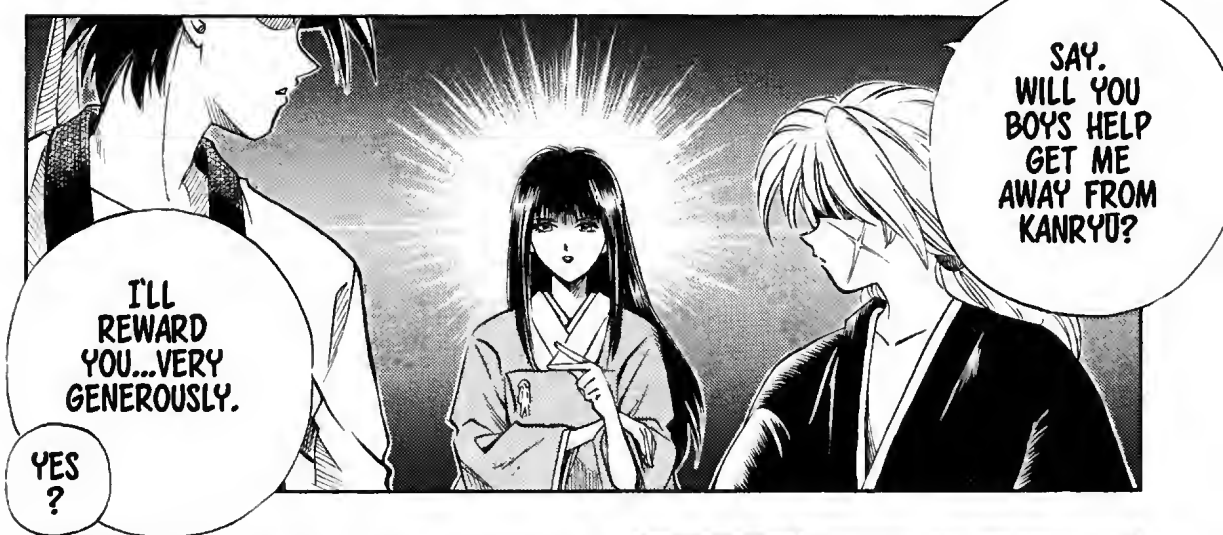
YOUR LEGS ARE NEXT.
AS A PUNISH-MENT.
"SPIRAL DARTS."
TOMO!
GINJI!

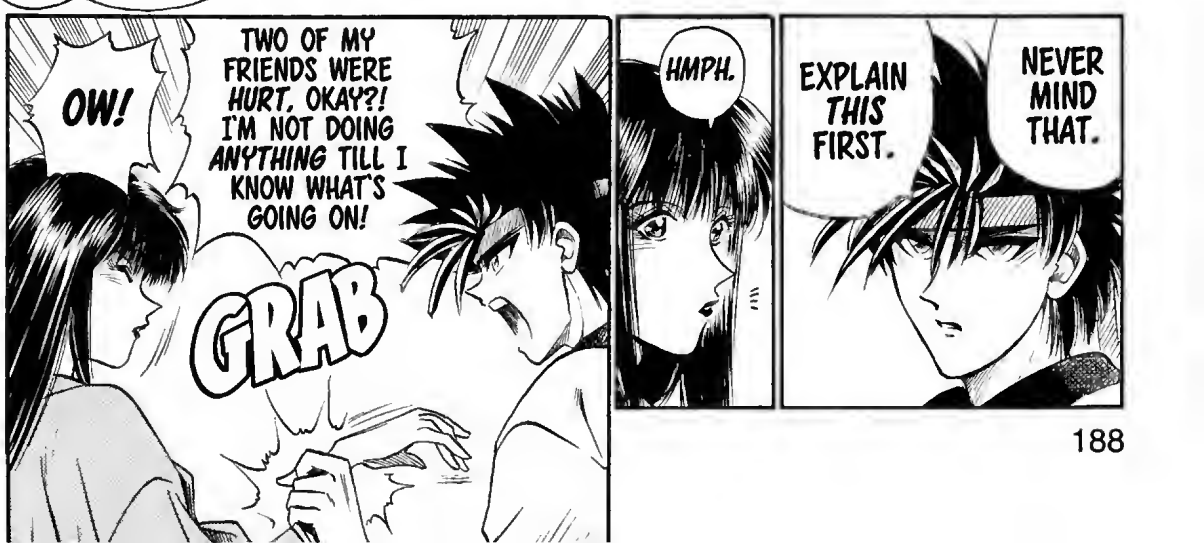
!
SSSSH
TP
IKKS
TYOOTYOO
DM
FFFT
FFFT
FLASH
TATAMI FLIP!
!!

THE SITUATION HERE ISN'T VERY CLEAR, BUT...
...BUT THIS ONE CAN'T WATCH AS PEOPLE GET HURT.
BEWARE! DO YOU THINK TO STOP MY DARTS WITH ONE LOUSY--?
YOU DARE ATTACK MY FRIENDS??!
RRRRRR
OOO!
OH.
ISH

AH??
EH?
OH???
WONK

THIS IS BAD.
THEY TOOK OUT THREE OF TAKEDA KANRYŪ'S SOLDIERS ...
MM... STRONG, AREN'T YOU?
ESPECIALLY THE SWORDSMAN-- JUST ABOUT INVINCIBLE.
SSSS
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ


SAY. WILL YOU BOYS HELP GET ME AWAY FROM KANRYŪ?
I'LL REWARD YOU...VERY GENEROUSLY.
YES ?


NEVER MIND THAT.
EXPLAIN THIS FIRST.
HMPH.
TWO OF MY FRIENDS WERE HURT, OKAY?! I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING TILL I KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!
OW!
GRAB

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 3: A REASON TO ACT

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in ***Rurouni Kenshin****. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or "family" name first, with personal or "given" name following. This is both because* ***Kenshin*** *is a "period" story, as well as to decrease confusion—were we to take the example of Kenshin's* sakabatô *and "reverse" the format of the historically established assassin-name "Hitokiri Battôsai," for example, it would make little sense to then call him "Battôsai Himura."*

Himura Kenshin
Kenshin's "real" name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryû
Kenshin's sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An "ancient style that pits one against many," it requires exceptional speed and agility to master

hitokiri
An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt "professional" names—***Kawakami Gensai***, for example, was also known as "Hitokiri Gensai"

Ishin Shishi
Loyalist or pro-Imperialist ***patriots*** who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Jigen-ryû
Aggressive swordsmanship style, characterized by one-handed draws/cuts, and the use of turning. Used in this story by Ujiki, a corrupt officer of the Police Sword Corps

Kamiya Kasshin-ryû
Sword-arts or ***kenjutsu*** school established by Kaoru's father, who rejected the ethics of ***Satsujin-ken*** for ***Katsujin-ken***

Katsujin-ken
"Swords that give life"; the sword-arts style developed over ten years by Kaoru's father and founding principle of ***Kamiya Kasshin-ryû***

Kawakami Gensai
Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of ***Himura Kenshin***

kenjutsu
The art of fencing; sword arts; *kendô*

Kiheitai
Fighting force which included men of both the merchant and peasant classes

Aizu
Tokugawa-affiliated domain; fourth battle of the ***Boshin War***

aku
Kanji character for "evil," worn by Sanosuke as a remembrance of his beloved, betrayed Captain Sagara and the ***Sekihô Army***

Bakumatsu
Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Boshin War
Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the ***Tokugawa Bakufu***. The anti-*Bakufu*, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters

-chan
Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—"Little Hanako or Kentarô"), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection

Chôshû
Anti-Tokugawa (shôgunate) domain; home to many ***patriots***

dojo
Martial arts training hall

-dono
Honorific. Even more respectful than ***–san***; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of "Milord So-and-So." As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility

Edo
Capital city of the ***Tokugawa Bakufu***; renamed ***Tokyo*** ("Eastern Capital") after the Meiji Restoration

Hijikata Toshizô
Vice-commander of the ***Shinsengumi***

Himura Battôsai
Swordsman of legendary skills and former assassin (*hitokiri*) of the ***Ishin Shishi***

sensei
Teacher; master

Shinsengumi
Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman–supporters of the military government (***Bakufu***) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the Shinsengumi ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the ***loyalists*** and restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of the imperial capital (see ***Kyoto***)

shôgi
Strategic Japanese board game. Often referred to as "Japanese chess"

shôgun
Feudal military ruler of Japan

shôgunate

See ***Tokugawa Bakufu***

suntetsu
Small, handheld blade, designed for palming and concealment

Tokugawa Bakufu
Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokugawa Yoshinobu
15th and last ***shôgun*** of Japan. His peaceful abdication in 1867 marked the end of the ***Bakufu*** and beginning of ***Meiji***

Tokyo
The renaming of "***Edo***" to "***Tokyo***" is a marker of the start of the ***Meiji Restoration***

Toba Fushimi, Battle at
Battle near ***Kyoto*** between the forces of the new, imperial government and the fallen ***shôgunate***. Ending with an imperial victory, it was the first battle of the ***Boshin War***

Yamagata Aritomo
(1838-1922) Soldier and statesman, chief founder of the modern Japanese army. A samurai of Chôshû, he studied military science in Europe and returned to Japan in 1870 to head the war ministry

zanbatô
Sanosuke's huge, oversized sword, destroyed during the battle with Kenshin

-kun
Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection

Kyoto
Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the Meiji Restoration in 1868

loyalists
Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; ***Ishin Shishi***

Meiji Restoration
1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the ***Tokugawa Bakufu*** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment"

patriots
Another term for ***Ishin Shishi***...and when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni
Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatô
Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice-versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-san
Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "*-san*")

Satsujin-ken
"Swords that give death"; a style of swordsmanship rejected by Kaoru's father

Seinan War
1877 uprising of the samurai classes against the new Meiji government, ending in defeat by the government army. Also known as the "Satsuma Rebellion"

Sekihô Army
Military unit (formed mainly of civilians) who, believing in the cause of the Emperor's restoration to power, were eventually turned upon by those same pro-Imperialist forces and declared traitors